RURAL PROBLEMS OF TODAY

ERNEST R. GROVES

L 10.5
301.762
G

RURAL PROBLEMS OF TODAY

RURAL PROBLEMS OF TODAY

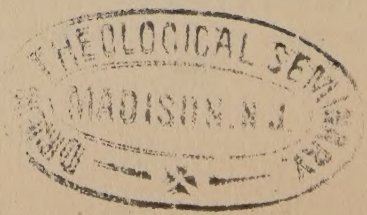
ERNEST R. GROVES

Author of "Moral Sanitation," "Using the Resources of the Country Church," etc.

ASSOCIATION PRESS
NEW YORK: 124 EAST 28TH STREET
1918

301.35
G884r

Copyright, 1918, by
The International Committee of
The Young Men's Christian Associations



To

GLADYS HOAGLAND

Whose Unselfish and Intelligent Care of

Catherine and Ernestine

Has Justified the Absolute Confidence

of Their Mother

136162

PREFACE

This book is written for the men and women who love the country and are interested in its social welfare. Fortunately there are many such, and each year their number is increasing.

Rural life has as many sides as there are human interests. This book looks out upon country-life conditions from a viewpoint comparatively neglected. It attempts to approach rural social life from the psychological angle. The purpose of the book forces it from the well-beaten pathways, but this effort to give emphasis to the mental side of rural problems is not an attempt to discount the other significant aspects of the rural environment. The field of rural service is large enough to contain all who desire by serious study to advance at some point the happiness, prosperity, and wholesomeness that belong by social right to those who live and work in the country.

The author desires to thank the following for the privilege of using material previously published: American Sociological Society, *American Journal of Sociology*, National Conference of Social Work, Association Press, and *Rural Manhood*.

E. R. G.

Durham, N. H.
April 1, 1918.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	vii
I. THE RURAL WORKER AND THE COUNTRY HOME	1
II. THE FAMILY IN OUR COUNTRY LIFE	15
III. THE RURAL WORKER AND THE COUNTRY SCHOOLS	41
IV. THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND THE RURAL WORKER	53
V. MENTAL HYGIENE IN RURAL DISTRICTS	71
VI. THE SOCIAL VALUE OF RURAL EXPERIENCE	89
VII. RURAL VS. URBAN ENVIRONMENT	103
VIII. THE MIND OF THE FARMER	117
IX. PSYCHIC CAUSES OF RURAL MIGRATION	135
X. RURAL SOCIALIZING AGENCIES	149
XI. THE WORLD-WAR AND RURAL LIFE	169

THE RURAL WORKER AND THE COUNTRY HOME

I

THE RURAL WORKER AND THE COUNTRY HOME

With reference to the care of children, faulty homes may be divided into two classes. There are homes that give the children too little care and there are homes that give them too much. The failure of the first type of home is obvious. Children need a great deal of wise, patient, and kindly care. Even the lower animals require, when domesticated, considerable care from their owners, if they are to be successfully brought from infancy to maturity. Of course children need greater care. No one doubts this. And yet it is certainly true that there are, even in these days of widespread intelligence, many homes where the children obtain too little care and in one way or another are seriously neglected.

The harmfulness of the homes that

give their children too much care is not so generally realized as is the danger of the careless and selfish home, although, in a general way, everyone acknowledges that children may be given too much attention. The difficulty is to determine when a particular child is being given too much adult supervision and too little freedom. No one would question the fact that a child can become an adult only by a decrease of adult control and an increase of personal responsibility. Nevertheless, in spite of a general belief that a child needs an opportunity to win self-government, there are parents not a few who, from love and anxiety, run into the danger of protecting and controlling their children too much. The father or mother spends too much time with the children. The children are pampered. Too many indulgences are permitted them. Children in these overcareful homes are likely to grow up neurotic, conceited, timid, babyish, daydreaming men and women, who are of

little use in the world and are often a serious problem for normal people. Probably this second type of a deficient home is more dangerous than the first, for children without sufficient home care often discover a substitute for their loss, but the over-protected children can obtain no antidote for their misfortune.

Everyone knows that attacks are increasingly being made upon the home in its present form by people who regard it as inefficient or as an anachronism. It is usually thought, however, that these attacks come mostly from agitators who set themselves more or less in opposition to all the institutions established by the present social order. Perhaps for this reason many do not believe that the family is receiving any serious criticism and its satisfactory functioning is therefore taken for granted. Such an easy-going optimism is not justified, for criticism of the home is coming from science as well as from the agitators. For example read "The Deforming Influences of

the Home," by Dr. Helen W. Brown, which appeared in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* for April, 1917. She writes in one place as follows:

"Small wonder, then, if we begin to see that many of the mental ills that afflict men are not due, as has been commonly supposed, to lack of home training and the deteriorating influence of the world, but to too much home, to a narrow environment which has often deformed his mind at the start and given him a bias that can only be overcome through painful adjustments and bitter experience."

The psychoanalysts and the clinic psychologists are gathering material all the time that illustrates the bad results of home influences, and soon the agitator will be using this as proof of the harmfulness of the home as an institution. Some of us believe that no skepticism can be more dangerous socially than that relating to the value of the home. The best protection of the home must come from its moral efficiency and this cannot

be obtained if people are unwilling to face reasonable and constructive criticism of the present working of the home. It is natural for the adult looking backward to his childhood to assume too much for the home, and then to transfer his emotion and his sense of the value of his home experience to the present family as an institution. With this enormous prejudice he refuses to see how often the family influence is morally and socially bad. It would surprise such a person at least to read an article like Emerson's "The Psychopathology of the Family" which recently appeared in *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology*. Material showing the unhappy results of inefficient family influences may be found in nearly any number of the *Psychoanalytic Review*.

There appear to be three causes of the unwholesomeness of home influences: lack of competition between homes, insufficient science regarding the home problems, and the pleasure basis of family organization.

First: There is no competition between

homes. This is a most strikingly peculiar situation. The home is competed against by other institutions, such as the saloon, the moving picture, and the like, but as between homes there is no competition whatever. Home life is a private affair. Public opinion rules that it remain private. Nothing is sooner or more seriously resented than interference with or criticism of the home life of the individual. Professional men, such as doctors, lawyers, and ministers, and business men compete with one another, and from this competition comes constant, sane change and progress. But in the home, there being no competition, methods of home management, however bad, go on without change. Parents never realize their habitual carelessness in home life. The scientists are seeking to bring some sort of competition into home life, but they are under a very heavy handicap. In fact this handicap is greater now than formerly, for our forefathers made long visits with each other, sometimes staying for weeks in one

home, thus giving ample opportunity for valuable criticisms and suggestions from guest to host.

Second: Bringing up children is really a scientific task and requires scientific information. But to obtain scientific information of practical value relating to the home is a baffling proposition. Human instincts and child development have been studied very little. We have theorized a great deal about such problems, but we have a remarkably small fund of actual accurate information. Such knowledge as we have recorded has been mostly obtained by parents, who have, of course, been prejudiced. In such cases we seldom know the later history of the child or the character of the home management and the actual contribution that the home made as compared with other influences. Men who have had to consider the entire history of an individual, who comes to the mind specialist for treatment because of some abnormality of mental or moral character, are gathering a great deal of

valuable material regarding family influences, but much of this is in regard to men and women who in one way or another have been social failures. We have no material at present of equal value in regard to the persons who in a popular sense are "normal individuals." Such valuable information as we already have, we are not very seriously trying to distribute. Yet, fortunately, a beginning has been made and the entire problem is receiving an attention that it has never before had.

Third: People are finding it difficult to accept the responsibilities that belong to family life. Modern men and women more and more are basing the home upon pleasure and comfort and personal advantages in a narrow and thoughtless sense. When the crucial tests of family fitness come with the children, the parents fail. They have had little specific training for their greatest obligation and under such circumstances it is strange only that so often they do not greatly fail. Children

are often unwelcome when they come into the home. Their coming disturbs the easy-going pleasure regime of the household and as they become somewhat of a burden to the father and mother, their interests are compromised, that their parents may continue to have some of the freedom which they enjoyed before the children came. Imagination cannot prepare for experience in such a degree as to make it possible for those who marry to realize the possible responsibilities of their choice. Because of this they often are found to have undertaken tasks against which in their heart of hearts they protest. It is natural for them, with such an internal dissatisfaction, not to commit themselves fully or sufficiently to the needs of their children.

Of one fact there is no doubt. Modern science is all the time illustrating that early childhood, the period when the influence of parents counts most, is the most significant of all the life of the individual. Diseases and weaknesses of a physical character that originate in early

life bring about physical results that show in later life. The same fact is true, but not so easily seen, with reference to mental, moral, and social characteristics. The influence of the parents upon the thinking of the child is particularly important. A child must be trained to think rightly early in life. He should be saved from a fanciful, dreamy life. He should be made to face real conditions, for only as he tussles with reality is he prepared to enter the relationships later demanded of mature adults. In all this he is much influenced by his parents. At times real ability in the child to meet his tasks with childish heroism is crushed by his parents and his entire life spoiled.

The county worker, the minister, and the social leader in the country must in their work consider seriously the needs of the home. The great war will surely put a new strain upon the family. One result is likely to be a freer relation between the sexes. Women now in new occupations, because of the demands for labor due to

war conditions, are likely to remain in considerable numbers. This will influence the home status. Schools are becoming more and more efficient and are taking over more of the home functions. Good social service in the country will encourage the home to use more fully its opportunities, to accept all its possible functions. It is well not to be in a hurry to take as our work that which the home fails to accomplish. The bad families, on the other hand, should be stripped of all functions possible. Such homes cannot be "eaten up" too soon.

Training should be provided for parents in the country. Some of this type of social service is already being carried on in the cities. It is equally needed in the country. Put on work for parents and get them to come. Bring in men who have practical messages of real value to parents. Don't seek to get a crowd. Lead country idealism to concrete problems. For example, attempt to lower the death rate by making information regarding

health more popular. Drive the patent medicines from their stronghold. Introduce the more thoughtful people to the work of the Life Extension Institute.

Do not forget the human need of inspiration. People know more now than they use. Get speakers who can inspire parents to activity. Only keep the inspiration from being dissipated. Connect with actual problems the interest awakened by good speakers. Insist upon enriching and encouraging the home through the contributions of earnest talks upon home problems. Don't expect cold science to accomplish with country people what it is unable to do in the city. Inspiration and instruction are both required.

THE FAMILY IN OUR COUNTRY LIFE

II

THE FAMILY IN OUR COUNTRY LIFE[1]

There is in our modern life nothing more significant than the increasing social discontent regarding the present status of the home. Criticism of our family conditions comes both from the enemies and from the friends of the home. A radical and vigorous school of thought finds in the family of today a mere social and moral anachronism, to be pushed aside as quickly as possible. Another group of thinkers, on the other hand, sees in the changes that are already taking place in the conditions of family life, a hopeless deterioration. In such a turmoil of social controversy there is at least unmistakable evidence that the home is passing through a period of readjustment. This much is clear: changes in our manner of life

[1]Published as a part of the report of the fifth Country Life Conference by Association Press under the title, "The Home of The Countryside."

have placed a strain upon the family that it cannot successfully withstand without greater efficiency.

Any effort to determine the value and obligations of the family, whether urban or rural, requires first of all a clear statement of the significant places of irritation, where at present the family is meeting strain that makes readjustment necessary. These may be classified as difficulties created by changes in:

1. The equipment or environment of the family.
2. The function of the family.
3. The internal adjustment of the family.

Regarding the family equipment, the situation in the city is certainly radically different from what it was. The usual dwelling place of the home was, in former times, a house which the family occupied exclusively. It made home seclusion and family fellowship easy and gave the family group a sense of responsibility for its place of living. For an increasing number of people, this type of dwelling place no

longer exists. In its place we have the flat, the hotel, and the apartment house. The new conditions do not provide the present family with a favorable equipment. The seclusion of the family is largely removed. The fellowship within the family circle is greatly decreased because of the limitations of the place of abode, and the increased attraction of places of amusement outside, made necessary because of the failure of the home to give satisfactory recreation. Of course, the sense of personal responsibility for the place of habitation is almost entirely destroyed. Such is the equipment furnished the family by modern city life. In the country, however, the family has had little significant change in its equipment.

The largest function of the family is its moral training. It is this service which has made the family the most important element in our past civilization. Were the family of the future to fail morally, it would be hard to imagine how

its existence could be justified. Without doubt this moral function of the family has centered about the children. The conditions of modern urban life, however, tend to make the moral training of the child by the home increasingly difficult. The city dwelling does not offer the child a normal opportunity for his play. The school and other institutions have to take over service formerly rendered the child in the home. In a large number of cases the urban home regards the child as merely a burden and therefore in such homes every effort is made to have no children born. This prevents the home from attempting the moral service for which it exists. Instead, the futile attempt is made to build up an enduring, satisfying home life upon the basis of the mere personal pleasure of husband and wife. In the country we find the home, for the most part, attempting to carry out its former function as an educational and moral institution.

The most serious difficulty in our present

family appears to be internal. Economic changes have brought women, to a very great degree, into industry as wage earners. Women are at present earning a livelihood in almost every form of occupation. New ethical and political ideas, in addition to this great economic change in woman's life, have influenced her status. She no longer has to marry in order to obtain the necessities of life. She can become a wage earner. If she marries, she brings into her new state of living the sense of independence that has come to her from her experiences as a wage earner. In many cases, after marriage she continues to work away from the home for wages. Marriage, as it used to be, made no provision for the new status of woman. It assumed a dependence, a subordination, and a limitation to which in these days many women refuse to assent. This internal change in the conditions of home life brings about a host of difficulties that require satisfactory adjustment if the living together of

the husband and wife is to be a happy one.

In the country the demand for this new adjustment is less serious, for there, to a greater degree than in the city, there are women who have not claimed their new status.

The rural home with reference to its equipment, function, and internal adjustment appears superior to the city home. When this conclusion is reached, many students of rural problems are content to drop the discussion of the rural family. Such an attitude of satisfaction concerning the country home is neither logical nor safe. It may well be that the country family will meet the strain due to modern changes later than the urban family, but sooner or later it will have to face the need of new adjustment. Only time itself can disclose whether the country home will find serious difficulties in the way of its final adjustment to the significant changes of modern life. There is certainly little security in the fact that

numerous country families have as yet been insensible to the matrimonial unrest so characteristic of urban people. What has come first to the urban centers must, sooner or later, to a greater or less degree, enter country life. Indeed, it is impossible to doubt that family discontent is growing in the country.

The important question, however, to the moral and social worker is whether the country is obtaining all that it should from its superior family opportunity. Assuming that it is healthier than the city, with reference to the equipment, function, and adjustment of the family, it is reasonable to ask, "What are the obstacles that keep the country home from making its largest moral contribution to society?"

One fault with some country homes stands out on the surface. The wife is too much a drudge. Her life is too narrow and too hard. This type of home is passing, no doubt, but it has by no means passed. This kind of woman may be little influenced by new thought, and

may think her situation as natural for her as it was for her mother. Whatever her personal attitude, however, from the very nature of things she is unable to make a significant moral contribution through her family duties. There will be striking exceptions, of course, but the general rule will stand—in modern life the woman drudge makes a poor mother. The fact that she is less likely to rebel against her hard condition than her urban sister, does not remove the dangers of her situation. And it is well for the lover of country welfare to remember that even when the wife accepts with no complaint the hardness of her lot, she often blames her husband's occupation, farming, for her misfortune, and becomes a rural pessimist, urging her children neither to farm nor to marry farmers. Her deep, instinctive protest appears through suggestion in the cravings of her children for urban life and urban occupation.

The housekeeping problem is for the woman on the farm seldom an easy one,

but, nevertheless, conditions that make of the farmer's wife an overworked house slave are in these days of labor-saving devices without excuse. In any case, such a family situation in the country, whatever its cause, must be regarded as pathological.

Sex has too large a place in the construction of the rural family. One of the advantages of the country family of which we hear much is the general tendency toward earlier marriages than in the city. Without doubt marriages, as a rule, do occur earlier among country people. This fact is significant in more ways than most writers recognize. A very thoughtful student of the American family, Mrs. Parsons, has called attention to the social importance of the fact that after maturity mental and moral traits are more likely to influence the choice than merely physical traits. In other words, the earlier marriages are more likely to be influenced by sex interests—using the term in a narrow sense—than are the later mar-

riages. This brings no social problem to the minds of those who see in marriage, for the most part, merely physical attraction and relations. The movement of human experience seems, however, on the whole, to be away from such a conception of marriage. Although the postponement of marriage requires for social welfare a greater moral self-control, we have every reason to suppose that we must gain social health by a higher moral idealism rather than by a return to the earlier marriage of former generations. In that case, to a considerable degree, the earlier marrying of the country people discloses that they have not as yet felt the full force of the modern causes that make for later marriages. Earlier marriages may be indeed happier, but they are often narrower.

A recent writer tells us that the vices of the country are the vices of isolation. Sex difficulties arise spontaneously and require no commercial exploitation when young people live a barren and narrow

life without ideals. This emphasis of sex is expressed not merely in immorality and illegitimacy, but also in a precocious interest in sex and in a precocious courtship. Early marriage, therefore, often represents the reaction from an uninteresting and empty environment and, however fortunate in itself, certainly does not demonstrate a socially wholesome situation.

To contrast the divorce situation in the country with that in the city also fails to give the basis for social optimism that the facts are often used to prove. Public opinion has more to do with actions than law, and at present the general attitude toward the granting of divorce is more conservative in the country than in the city. The reason for this difference is, in large measure, the fact that once again the country shows itself less sensitive to the changes that are taking place with reference to the conditions of marriage. It certainly is not safe to assume that the unhappy marriages in the country are in

proportion to the number of divorces. It is more likely that unless the urban attitude changes, in time the country will come to feel toward divorces much as city people do at present.

It is important to notice that, although legal divorce is frowned upon, there is often a considerable social indifference to the loose living together of men and women. Two clergymen at work in a rural community of about a thousand people recently stated that there were in the community at least forty unmarried people living together as husband and wife. Later, I was informed by another resident of the town that the clergymen had not exaggerated the situation. And yet I doubt not that the community had a rather low divorce record. It is very interesting how the moral code of a community may be strict at one point, while lenient at another. In some rural communities, at least, one may find an inconsistent public opinion that expresses very rigid hostility to divorce and little

practical opposition to lax sex relations. The low attitude toward the sex element in marriage and the coarse viewpoint disclosed by conversation often surprise the country visitor who is not acquainted with the occasional inconsistency of rural ethics. Judging the standing of married life by infrequent divorces and rather early marriage, he is painfully disconcerted to discover that the marriage ideal is nevertheless mean and lacking in social inspiration.

A third criticism is deserved by the rural family, namely, its failure to make use of its social opportunity. It is easy to demonstrate the greater normality of the rural family as compared with the urban family, with respect to the family conditions that make possible an efficient home life. It is not always true, however, that these superior family opportunities are of social value. It is true that children are generally valued in the rural home. This is, at times, for the supposed economic help the children are expected to be to the parents, rather than because

of an unselfish regard for the children, as a moral opportunity. It is true that the home generally counts for more in the life of the country child than in that of the city child. This by no means proves that the greater home influence is always a social asset. The home may penetrate the child's life deeply and yet affect it badly. If the home means more, the character of the home comes to have a larger meaning; what the significance of the home influence may be, is determined by the type of the home. A greater opportunity for family fellowship is naturally offered by the rural home, but this fellowship opportunity works both ways. The closer contact of all the members of the family often results in bringing all of them down to a low level of culture. The base attitude of one or of both parents toward life may poison each child's aspiration as he advances into maturity. The neighborhood relation, which brings several families into close contact, often permits a vicious child of

one family to initiate many children from various homes into sex experiences in such an unwholesome way that purity of mind becomes very difficult later on, whether the illicit intercourse comes to an end or not.

Rural people are too likely to be content with their superior family conditions. There is real need for an emphasis upon the proper use of these opportunities. The conscientious urban parent is stimulated to his best by the rivalry of other attractions that attempt to exploit his child. The rural parent has no security in the greater natural advantages of the country home. Everything depends upon the way the rural home makes use of its opportunity. The rural church, especially, should take to heart this remarkably significant fact.

No institution in the country has the importance of the family. Good moral strategy requires, therefore, that effort be made to make the rural home happy and wholesome. The needs of rural people

are indeed many, but there is no need greater than the fullest development of the opportunities for moral progress provided by the conditions of family life in the country. It would seem as if one principle should always be observed—no effort is wholly good that looks toward a substitution for family responsibility. It is also true that the family will not again have the moral monopoly of the child. Necessary as it may be, in certain cases, to allow the family to farm out its important functions to some other institution, this condition ought always to be recognized as unfortunate. The better way of making permanent progress is effort that encourages the family to make better use of its neglected opportunities.

First of all, the rural home needs to be spiritualized. Of course, there is equal need of spiritualizing the urban home, but that problem does not concern us now. Objections are sure to be raised against any rural program that bases itself upon an attempt to emphasize idealism and

a spiritual interpretation of experiences. There is, however, no other way. Material progress will neither content nor elevate country life. Contact with nature is so close and constant that when spiritual insight is lacking there is bound to be a fatalistic and brutalizing tendency. Religion that does not enter intimately into everyday life and enrich the baffling experiences of daily labor with great spiritual interpretations, gives little of value to country people. The rural home awakens to its opportunities only when it is invigorated by vital spiritual inspiration. A materialistic philosophy of life will eat the heart out of the country and leave it in despair. Country people seldom have wide choice; they must either penetrate common experience with the eye of confident idealism, or they must dig the earth, bent down with the oppressing burden of dissatisfied toil. Whatever the philosophy of life, it will command the spirit of the home.

Parents also need training if they are

to make successful use of the opportunities placed in their hands. This training needs especially to give the parents a right point of view respecting sex and sex-instruction. At present there is a powerful taboo in most country places regarding any constructive attempt to give helpful sex information, although, as a matter of practice, conversation often gravitates toward sex in a most unwholesome fashion. The taboo is fixed for the most part upon any public recognition of sex, while privately, interest in matters of sex is taken for granted. We have gossip and scandal, but little right-minded attention to sexual knowledge. This condition must change before many families will be fit to win the full confidence of the children and to influence them toward a high-minded outlook upon life.

We must appreciate the very valuable efforts that are already being put forth to make the rural homes more efficient with reference to sanitation, hygiene, and proper food. This instruction promises to de-

crease much human suffering, discontent, and poverty. In some respects such constructive service is more needed in the country than in the city. Certainly, good results are already appearing as a result of the efforts that institutions and people interested in the country have put forth.

The rural family must be made to realize the consequential character of childhood experience. The alienist especially has demonstrated the significant influence of childhood upon adult motives and conduct. Recent studies of human conduct have greatly magnified the importance of early experience and have disclosed how often it is the first cause of morbid thinking and anti-social actions. The conclusion is not to be doubted—a still greater effort must be made to conserve human character by a wiser control of the influences of childhood. One may discover for himself how interested conscientious parents are in detailed illustrations of childhood influence

upon adult life and how impressed they are with the seriousness of such facts. Rural families must be taught more generally this impressive contribution of modern science.

A much greater effort must be made in many localities to lift from the rural family the burden of the feeble-minded. The possible harm that may be caused by a high-grade feeble-minded boy or girl in the country can be appreciated only by one who has come in contact with such a problem. The close contact, free association, and common interests of rural folk, with the added difficulty of segregating one's child, even when the menace of a feeble-minded associate is fully recognized, make the presence of feeble-minded boys and girls in the country a more difficult and more serious matter than is the case at present in the city. The school and the state, that is, the state by means of the opportunity provided by the schools, must take more effective measures to handle this problem. Until

this has been brought about by public education and agitation, many rural families will be required to encounter serious moral dangers and problems for which society is itself responsible.

The rural family needs to be taught to be more just and more generous in regard to other families. The clannish spirit ought to pass, for it is without excuse in these days. The family interests a generation ago were altogether too narrowly conceived to make a wholesome social life possible. Greater cooperation is necessary if rural people are to make progress, and this cooperation is impossible when families are jealous and suspicious. This obstacle in the way of wholesome rural culture, made by selfish and petty family motives, it is useless to ignore. Unless the obstacle can be pushed aside, other efforts to inspire country people to a realization of their social opportunities must surely fail. Family life in the country can be saved from its besetting sin when rural leader-

ship undertakes this task with the seriousness its importance justifies.

The rural family must be led to adopt a positive morality. This is imperative. The age of prohibition as an expression of ideals has passed. Emphasis must be placed upon what we should do, and must be removed from a trivial and legalized code of "Don'ts." Here and there in the country we find a firmly entrenched negative interpretation of moral obligation. Nothing is so dangerous morally as this. Nothing can so certainly drive out of the community the broad-minded, fine-spirited youth. The family must interpret morality with good sense and with a full regard for the proportions of things. The parents must teach a better moral standard than they themselves were taught. The home morality must have the flavor of kindliness and sweet reasonableness. Morality, to be true to its essence, does not require that it be made disagreeable. Goodness is beauty expressed in human conduct and,

therefore, deserves freedom to disclose its winsome charm as well as its stern pre-eminence.

This program for constructive social service in the country is largely based upon the conservation of the moral and spiritual resources of the country. The deepest need of the country can be satisfied by no smaller propaganda. The instruments for such service we already have. The country school, the country church, neighborhood fellowship, and the Young Men's Christian Association provide the means for a moral and spiritual renaissance in the country. There is no easier way to obtain a healthy rural family life than by a skilful, serious, and large-hearted use of our moral institutions in concrete, courageous, and modern instruction, and in persuasive inspiration.

THE RURAL WORKER AND THE COUNTRY SCHOOLS

III

THE RURAL WORKER AND THE COUNTRY SCHOOLS

Of late the rural schools have been receiving much attention. Educators and others interested in rural welfare have seriously studied the needs and opportunities of our country schools and the good results of this interest are already revealing themselves. It is true, of course, that much of this contribution to the rapidly increasing literature devoted to rural educational problems has come from men who live in urban communities and who for the most part have expert knowledge concerning the administration of urban schools.

It is easy, without doubt, to give too much emphasis to the peculiar needs of the rural schools and to forget that urban and rural schools have much in common. Without forgetting that many of our

school problems are fundamental and present in all schools regardless of the environment in which they attempt to function, it is reasonable to regret that a larger part in the discussions relating to rural education has not been taken by people living in the country and familiar with the rural life of the present time. It is only just to add, however, that both urban and rural education suffer because so little influence comes into school theory and practice from those who stand outside the profession of teaching. The teacher is not likely to know life so widely or so accurately as do those men and women who have won success by meeting actual situations that test practical judgment and sound self-control. Every one subscribes to the statement that the business of education is the preparation of pupils for life, every one knows that the value of such a preparation can be made certain only by being brought under the acid test of the actual conditions of social life, but few there are that realize

that one of the ever-present problems of educational efficiency is due to the fact that the thinking that influences the purposes and methods of teachers mostly originates within the profession itself. The significance of this would be apparent were it true that all of one's education for life comes from the schools; happily, this is not true, and most pupils obtain valuable experiences from actual contact with problems of life that impress them more deeply than the preparation which at the same time the school is trying to give.

The rural worker needs to feel a responsibility for the making of some contribution to the rural school's social program. He cannot help having some advantages, in judging the results of school training, over the teacher who is busy with the process of instruction itself. Without doubt the rural worker has felt incompetent to enter much into educational discussion, thinking that such matters are sacred to those who have ped-

agogic training, but a moment's thought convinces one that, since the teacher has more to do with the preparation for life than the living of life, it is socially unsafe for the teacher to have a complete monopoly of educational discussion and to obtain no help from those who test the product of his schools.

The rural school has at present needs that stand out. First, it needs to be socialized. This is true also of the urban school, but it is not equally true. Urban schools have to some degree responded to the pressure of modern life and have assumed in increasing measure a social function. There has been no such pressure from rural communities. Often the educational ideals for which country people have enthusiasm are composed of experiences in a school-spirit less social than that usually found in the rural school of the present time. This means that the pressure of public opinion often pushes backward, while the urban school is being forced forward.

Neither country school nor city school can obtain much success in its socializing program until it really ministers to the physical needs of its pupils. Theory to the contrary, the school system still forgets that the chief business of the child is the making of a body, and that for the sake of future personal and social welfare the needs of the body must have right of way. Until this fact of nature is given its full worth and the mental side of the school work is subordinated, public education can never be a complete success. So long as the body needs of the growing child are exploited for the purpose of obtaining mental results that appear to the adult outside of the teaching profession both trivial and premature, there can be no hope that the school will maintain a perfectly wholesome social program. This problem is certainly as serious in the country school as in the city school. This matter is no by-product. When the schools fail to conserve human possibilities by ignoring the regulations im-

posed by natural law upon the operation of their educational processes, the schools are socially negligent. They are faulty in the purpose for which they have been created.

The second difficulty comes from the first. The rural school still needs a larger program. When it seriously undertakes to assume its function as the most effective of our social institutions, it will make radical changes in its program. To affirm this one need not forget or undervalue the changes already made. Additions have been made to the program. The spirit of the program has not been radically changed. We still provide an individualistic preparation—hopelessly inadequate though it is—rather than the social training which can be the only safe foundation for social progress. We still overvalue ancient knowledge and former educational values. We still refuse to admit into our schools occupations and interests that belong there because they are consistent with the instincts of the child. The

country school has been stupidly indifferent to the wealth of its resources and has forced upon its pupils a meager and lifeless program. When a country high school, for example, attempts to minister to the needs of its students with a program of study that includes no science of any kind, the people of that community ought to be told, as recently in one case they were, that they are enforcing an educational policy that prophesies community suicide.

The third difficulty of the rural school system is its institutionalism. No effective organization can be developed without creating in it the danger of too great institutional concern. Those who are connected with the schools very easily come to regard its problems from the point of view of the welfare of the organization rather than that of the best interests of the children. Of course this mistake is nearly always unconscious and those who are really influenced by the professional instinct to protect the immediate

interests of the school as an institution come to believe that they are also doing the best that can be done for the people. It is, however, the clear teaching of human history that effort to maintain the welfare of any social organization is likely to decrease the attention given to its efficiency. The attitude of institutional self-protection leads to uncritical methods, easy-going content, and rigid, unprogressive habits of thought. In our public school system the vital influences are always in conflict with the constructive endeavor of those who, because of their desire for professional repose, insist that the institution keep its attention upon itself and continue as it happens to be. In the country this attitude is likely to receive less criticism than in the city and for that reason those who wish progress in the country must assume an unending struggle against it.

Whatever its faults, the rural school in its influence upon country youth has only one possible rival—the home. At present

the school is obtaining more and more opportunity to influence young life; the home is losing more and more of the opportunities it once had. It behooves, therefore, any one who serves young life in the country, to appreciate what a power for good or for evil, for progress or for regression, the schools are. Every effort should be made to understand the schools. With the teachers sympathetic relationships should be maintained, but without even a tinge of subserviency. An unbiased judgment of the social value of the schools, known only to himself, should be constructed by the rural worker and then every effort should be made to cooperate with the striving of the school for better results and to supplement with generous spirit the necessary limitations of public school service. Indirectly and quietly the rural worker may wisely try to invest as much as possible of himself in the school's social service by working through those who control the public education of the community.

No rural worker can expect a greater ally than an efficient, socially-minded country school.

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND THE RURAL WORKER

Drew Theological Seminary Library

IV

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND THE RURAL WORKER

The difference between the urban and the rural church may easily be exaggerated. There are differences, of course, and it is natural that the rural worker and the student of country life should make too much of what is characteristic of the church ministering to country people. At bottom, however, the two types of churches share the same experiences. Therefore, what may be said in regard to one will prove also to be largely true of the other. For the purpose of giving emphasis to the work of the rural church, nevertheless, we are justified in forgetting for the moment how common to both forms of church life are the fundamental needs, resources, and possibilities.

Those who carry the burdens of church

administration are generous in listening as they do to the criticism and counsels of those who stand outside. Indeed, so much has been said and is still being said in regard to the work of the country church, especially by those who are not clergymen and not responsible for the directing of church activity, that one may well hesitate to express another opinion. And yet the tolerance of those who have in charge the policy of the country church is in itself significant and invites additional suggestions regarding the function of the Christian Church in country places. It is significant because it discloses that the church leaders know that the rural churches have serious problems. It invites suggestions because it reveals that the leaders are in some measure perplexed as to what is required in our day of the country church, and are therefore not hostile to any contribution that has a constructive purpose.

Institutions tend to be self-satisfied and self-protecting. A religious institution

especially is in danger of becoming content and resentful of criticism because, by its nature, it deals with matters that seem beyond the investigation that man prescribes for ordinary things, and therefore secure from the scrutiny and criticism given to common, everyday interests. Of course the Church has no right to protect itself from criticism with respect to its efficiency of service by asking that it be treated as if it were itself religion.

The fact that the leaders of the rural church are not taking this attitude is of all things most helpful. It proves that their eyes are directed outward toward their responsibilities and that the rural churches are not in danger of the greatest evil that ever befalls a religious institution—a blind leadership which cannot distinguish between success and failure and is therefore well content when it ought to be most dissatisfied.

Whether rural church leadership is willing to consider radical changes in methods of social and moral service is a question

time alone can answer. The test has not yet been made; whether serious changes should be considered can at present be only a matter of opinion. At present the usual attitude seems to be that the rural church needs more skill—new methods—in the doing of what it has always been doing. There appears as yet to be little disposition to ask whether modern life requires of the rural church that it change in large measure its form of service.

With its history of past success by the use of present methods deep in its consciousness, it is certainly difficult for the rural church to consider without prejudice the possibility of its needing to change its manner of functioning. It is, however, possible that life has been so changed, so fundamentally changed, that the Church to meet its present duties and to use its present resources must make profound changes in its method of service. When the situation advances to the point where such changes receive serious consideration, some of us believe that the following

questions will be asked and finally answered on the basis of experiment and experience:

1. Must not the rural church give less attention to preaching? The theological student is still taught by many of our Protestant seminaries, just as he was a decade ago, that the minister's chief function is preaching. There can be no doubt concerning the supreme importance of preaching in the past. Is not, however, its effectiveness decreasing? If the Church were starting its work at the present time, in the light of the methods of other organizations, would we expect it to put the stress upon preaching that it does at present? There are two reasons why preaching ought not to have the emphasis it has had in the past. Much of its former importance was due to influences that are now exerted by the newspaper, the magazine, the library, the public lecture, and even by the theater. The sermon no longer has the monopoly it once had in the bringing of moral truth to the atten-

tion of the people. Many people are more deeply impressed by the methods of presenting truth exercised by some of the Church's rivals for popular attention. It is also true that, since religion has tried to function more in social life and the Church has not so much tried to build up an experience of dogma within the life of the individual, the sermon has, as a means of public influence, suffered some handicap. It is largely because of this that the Church has undertaken so much new work in addition to the preaching.

There is, of course, a limit in the process of taking on new forms of service and eliminating nothing. The minister is human and he simply can not do so much as is asked of him. Charles M. Sheldon, in a very interesting essay in regard to the work of the minister,[1] says that the man does not live who can produce two good, new sermons each week. In the long run the rural church must decrease

[1] "Man or Superman," *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1917.

the emphasis upon preaching, if it is successfully to carry on the new work that from time to time it is adding. And the new activities come with all the momentum that belongs to service that seems to fulfil real needs.

When the Church devotes less attention to preaching, it will certainly give more consideration to its function as a leader of worship. Protestantism has never exaggerated this part of the Church's activity; it usually still undervalues the importance of the esthetic element in religion. Worship tends to emphasize the common elements; preaching necessarily brings out the differences between religious people. When there is less importance given to preaching and more to worship, there will be a decrease in sectarianism.

Of course there are orators who preach and who enjoy the influence and popularity that oratory always will have. These men, however, are outstanding and their success illustrates the continuing power of oratory, but it gives no argu-

ment for the effectiveness of preaching in general. As a person having an instinctive bias for the spoken word, I have slowly been driven to the opinion that a great multitude of people feel differently and are more sincerely and more easily influenced by other means of bringing truth home to the hearts of men and women.

Less attention to preaching will permit the rural minister to undertake the other work given in the following parts of the program here presented.

2. There is a second question that we may expect the rural church some time to consider—must not the Church make more of modern science as a means of developing social and individual character? This question is likely to reveal different ideas as to what religion is. One who thinks of the spiritual as the flower of complete living, who wishes every possible wholesome condition provided for character-formation, will naturally regard science as the friend of religion and the basis for moral progress. There is no one who

does not wish the Church in some degree to take advantage of the means for its wider service provided by discovery and invention. Must not the rural church undertake to distribute to the community life the helpful information science has, unless it is willing to give to some other institution a great moral service that at present it can best perform? Until it assumes in a greater degree and in a more conscious manner the distribution of science in the small community life, can we expect any amount of exhortation to make the community life what it should be? The people need, to meet their problems, concrete information that furnishes specific answers to their difficulties.

At present the average minister realizes that his training has been philosophic rather than scientific. His outlook upon life is from a different viewpoint than that from which most men face experience. He often builds his service for men upon a basis which no other professional man

except the lawyer—and he in a smaller and decreasing degree—is attempting to use in practical effort. If the minister had been given more science in his preparation for life, there is little doubt that the Church would have accepted, especially in small towns and villages, its opportunity to popularize science by bringing men and women skilful in presenting useful information into the community and by this time would have been regarded as socially the most valuable instrument for the distribution of science.

3. Another question the rural church must soon face. Must there not be less emphasis given to individualism and more to social control? This is a question the schools are already facing. A philosophic outlook naturally tends toward an emphasis upon individual responsibility in a way science does not justify. Science (medicine, abnormal psychology, and the social sciences especially) is showing more and more why men act as they do. One's very personality is social in origin. The

pressure of early influences and of later public opinion is very great. Moral results follow influences that belong to diseases, abnormal experiences, unfortunate suggestions, defective inheritance, and a multitude of causes understood by science. If religion is the supreme experience of a wholesome, normal individual, there can be no doubt that increasingly we must regard our moral problems as social more deeply than individual. This will force the rural church to give up its present unreasonable emphasis upon individual conduct and lead it to assume a much larger social responsibility.

4. Finally, do not the currents of modern thought and feeling appear to lead to a greater emphasis upon Christianity as a service rather than as a system of thought? Will not the rural church consider whether it must not put more emphasis upon itself as a function and less upon itself as an interpreter of doctrine? This is the big question. At present the Church wishes to increase

its service, but it has only slight inclination to reduce the attention it gives to doctrine. The essential element in Christianity, service—largely as a result of the work of the churches—has now widespread acceptance, but many are not captivated by the doctrinal side of church activity. Such men must understand the meaning of faith to Paul by the meaning of religion to Jesus. They respond to the appeal of service; they do not take interest in matters of doctrine. To such the Church is a function, not an interpreter of dogma. What represents religious sanity in such a movement it is for time to reveal, but the current now flows toward service and away from a system of doctrine.

Service brings religious people together; doctrine separates them. It is therefore natural that with the present tendency toward making religion an activity, there should go a profound movement toward religious consolidation. The reaction from narrower and narrower division, smaller

and smaller groups, within Protestantism is very determined. What a blessing this is proving for the rural people! The burden of sectarianism is hardest for them to endure. Someone has said that every argument for the consolidated school is equally strong for the consolidated church. If activity proves a working basis for the fellowship of Christian people, we may in time have the community church attempting to serve all the people in every possible way, and in association with other churches assuming the same function. At present this appears very distant and we are satisfied when we find churches federating, while still assuming the seriousness of doctrinal differences.

Our entire social life seems in a state of flux. It is commonplace thought that changes are taking place. We are too closely related to the movement to know just what is to be the outcome. A more stable condition must some time come. It now appears that rural life is entering upon the period of flux which heretofore

has been more characteristic of the cities. It is folly to suppose that church life will not at all change during such a social experience as that upon which we have entered. The rural worker must in every way possible help the Church in the work it is now doing. He has no right, however, to be content with merely doing this. He also should seriously think over and over the problems of possible changes in church activity, that new social demands may not be ignored. Since he knows the work of many churches, he has a basis for wide-minded thought. This will prepare him to serve those churches that attempt new service. In other words, the best type of rural worker will not merely assist the Church that now is; he will also have sympathy and understanding for the Church that is coming to be. This second task is more difficult than the first. It will require critical thought, vision, patience, courage, and good judgment.

Perhaps a sufficient criticism of this

program is contained in the question, "Why doesn't the author try to put his program in practice?" The force of this challenge has been felt, even by one who is imbedded in a different occupation and who has peculiar obligations that would seem to forbid entering a new field of service. This much is certain, were I a minister in any degree successful, I would be unlikely to feel the need of any radical change in the program of the rural church; were I a failure, I would have no courage to suggest the change. As an outsider I have come to think that some change of program is sure to come, but not quickly. Meanwhile it is wisdom for us all to remember that the mission of the Church is a larger matter than its methods.

MENTAL HYGIENE IN RURAL DISTRICTS

V

MENTAL HYGIENE IN RURAL DISTRICTS

Nervous diseases, insanity, and feeble-mindedness are a grievous burden for modern society. Every form of social ill roots itself in these mind disorders. Since this great burden seems to be increasing as a result of the conditions of present-day living, it is not strange that those most familiar with the situation are seriously alarmed. This concern is expressing itself in movements that attempt to educate the public to the need of conserving the mind in every possible way. Interest is being aroused in mental hygiene and this fact promises great social relief. It is indeed fortunate that philanthropic effort has thus become welded with science and is eager to get at one of the most serious sources of poverty, alcoholism, prostitution, crime, and physical suffering.

The student of any of these great social problems knows that the roots of the difficulty usually run down into human weaknesses such as the mental hygiene movement is attempting to correct and prevent.

The mental hygiene propaganda has been up to the present time largely confined to the urban centers, but it is very important that our rural districts receive the benefits that come from attention to the problems of mental health. Not that rural people have greater need of mental hygiene than have those who live in the cities. Many alienists, on the contrary, believe the city more in need of mind-conserving activities, and, although there is no satisfactory basis for comparison, it would seem as a result of the data gathered by the last census[1] that their conclusion is reasonable in light of the evidence we have at present regarding conditions in this country. The country needs em-

[1] "Insane and Feebleminded in Institutions," Washington, D. C., 1914, pp. 50 and 54.

phasis because it can be more easily neglected than the city.

People in the country are less likely to realize the needs of mental hygiene. As a rule, rural conditions that should challenge the attention of the leaders of the communities are not spectacular and appear in isolation. In urban life, on the other hand, thoughtful social workers are bound to see many individual cases that belong to the defective group as a mass, and thereby to realize the seriousness of the problem. If the rural leaders could put together the cases of social maladjustment present in many different communities, there is no doubt that the great need of mental hygiene in the country would be easily recognized.

It is also true that mental hygiene propaganda is somewhat more difficult in the country, partly because of the temper of mind of rural leadership and partly because of the lack of means for the reaching of popular attention. People are not likely to be spontaneously interested

in the mental hygiene movement. They require the instruction and inspiration that come through the personality of the alienist. Fortunately our daily and weekly papers realize the seriousness of the mental hygiene propaganda and they circulate both in the country and in the city. This fact is making many of the leading people in the country nearly as familiar with the problem of mental hygiene as are city leaders.

Even though we know less than we should like concerning the amount and the significance of mental deficiency in the country, we already have information that reveals the need of mental hygiene effort among rural folk. The report of the New Hampshire Children's Commission made in 1915 contains a significant conclusion in regard to the feeble-mindedness in the rural section of that state. "One of the most significant studies that can be made in the survey of these counties is the geographic distribution of the feeble-minded and the proportion of the

entire state population that falls within this defective class Since there has been a report from every town in the state, either by questionnaire or personal canvass, this proportion may be considered fairly correct, even though many cases have not been reported. One of the most significant revelations of this table is the range of feeble-mindedness gradually ascending from the smallest percentage, in the most populous county of the state, to the largest percentages, in the two most remote and thinly populated counties. It speaks volumes for the need of improving rural conditions, of bringing the people in the remote farm and hill districts into closer touch with the currents of healthy, active life in the great centers. It shows that a campaign should begin at once—this very month—for the improvement of rural living conditions, and especially for the improvement of the rural schools, so that the children now growing up may receive the education that is their birthright." We also have two recent govern-

ment reports that disclose the need of mental hygiene among rural people.[2]

The first report, based upon a survey made in Newcastle County, Delaware, contains among the conclusions these that are of special interest to the student of rural life:

"Five-tenths of 1 per cent of 3,793 rural school children examined in New Castle County are definitely feeble-minded and in need of institutional treatment.

An additional 1.3 per cent of the total number were so retarded mentally as to be considered probable mental defectives and in need of institutional care.

A number of mentally defective children were encountered who exhibited symptoms similar to those which are observed in the adult insane.

It is believed, as a result of this survey,

---

[2] "Mental Status of Rural School Children," by E. H. Mullan, Public Health Reports, Nov. 17, 1916, and "The Mental Status of Rural School Children of Porter County, Indiana," by T. Clark and W. L. Treadway, Public Health Bulletin No. 77.

that epilepsy is a more prevalent disease than it has heretofore been thought to be."

The other report gives the following information:

"Of the 1,087 girls and 1,098 boys examined in the rural schools, 93 of the former and 100 of the latter were below the average mentally, or 8.7 per cent of the whole number.

Of the total school population, 0.9 per cent were mental defectives.

The undue number of one-room rural schools in the county which were of faulty construction, with poor equipment, and with imperfect teaching facilities, were largely responsible for the retardation found in the county.

The average loss of grade by 193 children, as recorded by teachers, was 1.28 years for girls and 1.5 years for boys, a total of 269 school years.

No special classes for the instruction of retarded children were found in any of the rural schools of the county.

In addition to the 214 children who

were retarded and exceptionally retarded, three epileptics and two constitutionally inferior children were found among the school children of the county."

These interesting investigations do not, of course, disclose the full amount of mental defectiveness in the localities studied, because they are based on a survey of the children at school and because they especially take up the matter of retardation and feeble-mindedness. It is no uncommon thing in the small rural community to find the more troublesome feeble-minded child withdrawn from the school. The reports suggest that a wider investigation would increase the number of defective children, for the method chosen could hardly be expected to discern all the seriously neurotic children. The information gathered indicates that epilepsy and the neurotic predisposition to insanity need to be investigated as well as amentia,[3] and that the epileptics and neurotics, even

[3]Amentia is used as a technical term for feeble-mindedness.

among rural children, are more numerous than is usually supposed. Of course an investigation of the adults would still more increase the amount of mental abnormality.

The sociologist is familiar with the social menace of the degenerate family in the country. Most of the members of the families thus far studied have lived in the country or small village. It is reasonable to suppose that on the whole such families find it easier to survive in the country than in the city. The country offers occupation for the high grades during the busy season and yet does not require steady employment all through the year. The social penalties of mental inferiority are not likely to be so oppressive; certainly there is much less danger of coming into collision with the law. Our institutions find from experience that the feeble-minded take kindly to rough, out-door work and from this it is natural to assume that a large number of the feeble-minded, free to choose their environ-

ment, prefer the country to the city. They are probably more often handicapped by the competition of city life than by the conditions of life in the rural community.

It is probably true also that the feeble-minded family is more likely to renew its vitality by the mixing in of new, normal blood in the country than in the city. Illegitimacy holds in the problem of rural feeble-mindedness the same position that prostitution occupies in urban amentia. The attractive feeble-minded girl—and of course many of these girls are physically attractive to many men—does not find it difficult in the country to have sex relations with mentally normal men. Indeed it is often not realized that the girl is mentally abnormal, and all too frequently we have a marriage in the country between a woman of unsound mind and a man who is mentally sound. Illegitimacy is, however, the larger problem in rural amentia. The same type of girl that in the country becomes the

mother of several children, often by different men, in the city, unless protected, enters prostitution. The city prostitute, because of the sterilizing effects of venereal diseases, is less likely to become the mother of children, but, on the other hand, she scatters about syphilis, which has so much to do with causing mental abnormalities. It may be a matter of opinion which of the two social evils, illegitimacy in the country or prostitution in the city, has the larger influence upon the spread of mental abnormalities, but there can be no doubt that the rural difficulty deserves the attention of all interested in mental hygiene.

It is unfortunate that rural people do not realize more often the serious meaning of feeble-mindedness. The close contact between neighbors and the familiarity of community life tend in the country to develop an indifference to the variations from normal standard that the high-grade ament expresses. People, as a rule, take the social failures of the feeble-minded for

granted and do not specially regard them as evidences of mental inferiority. This condition makes the limited segregation possible in the country very difficult indeed. The thoughtful parent hardly knows how to keep his child from associating with the deficient child of his neighbor when they live near together and attend the same school.

At school also the feeble-minded child is likely to have advantages over his city brother, which keep him from exhibiting to the full his inherent mental weakness. A conversation with almost any rural teacher will impress upon one the fact that the teacher is loath to declare feeble-minded a child whose records give unmistakable evidence of amentia and that she generally regards the child as merely dull. Fortunately this is likely not to be so true in the future, as a result of the recent instruction that candidates for teaching are now receiving in our normal schools.

There is, however, the greatest need of clinic work being carried on in our rural

schools. The problem cannot safely be left with local authority. The demand is for some state-wide method of mental examination of school children. This service, which in most states could be given over to the superintendent of public instruction, ought to be given wider scope than merely the mental measurement of school children. The problem requires the service of the alienist. Only by this more fundamental treatment of the problem can we expect to obtain the full social relief that the preventive side of mental hygiene promises. As a matter of fact, however, it is likely that the problem will be considered first from the viewpoint of retardation in our rural schools. It will be unwise to force the mental hygiene movement into our rural school administration more rapidly than the need of it can be made clear to our rural leadership.

It is an unhappy fact that we are at present doing so little. The state certainly must try in some way to provide, for the country children who need it, the

special class instruction now given backward children in the cities. This will give relief by providing a basis for the separation of the curable and the incurable defective children. At present the defective child who requires treatment and improves in the special class suffers a great handicap by being in the country rather than in the city.

Without doubt epilepsy and psychopathic cases, as well as feeble-mindedness, receive relatively less attention in the country than in the city. This situation certainly hinders rural progress and adds to the social burdens of rural communities. Any one familiar with the life of a typical rural town will know of peculiarities of conduct and strange attitudes of non-social persons which indicate mental unsoundness. These abnormalities express themselves in various forms and I happen to know of some New England communities that have been hopelessly separated into two hostile parts as a result of the influence of persons whose subse-

quent careers have proven that the originators of the difficulties were socially irresponsible. One such case was a church quarrel that finally had to receive a statewide recognition because of the serious situation that finally resulted. The later suicide of the individual who first started the dispute, a suicide that had little objective explanation, seems to have demonstrated that the whole difficulty originated because of the influence of a psychopathic character. In this case had the community known a very little about mental aberration the history of the difficulty would have been very different. Even as it was, a very few of the more thoughtful people believed the man insane.

The chief reason, however, for mental hygiene propaganda in the country is the influence it will have in preventing human suffering. The problem of mind health is a humane one and this fact removes the distinction between rural and urban need. Urban fields offer more inducements at present for the worker, but the

rural need is also great. The rural districts are less conscious of their distress and perhaps respond less readily to whatever instruction is given them, but they certainly must be given the benefits of the mental hygiene movement by a patient and persistent propaganda.

THE SOCIAL VALUE OF RURAL EXPERIENCE

VI

THE SOCIAL VALUE OF RURAL EXPERIENCE

Our social ideas, the expression of what the psychologists define as the social mind, are influenced too much by the thinking of urban people, too little by that of people who live in the country and small villages. There are many reasons for this undesirable social situation. One is the outstanding fact that the city has the prestige that belongs to political and commercial leadership. The urban leaders have for the most part obtained their position by their possession of the means of control of industries and of the channels of communication, or because of their skill in winning public attention. They have become successful by exercising capabilities that naturally give them social influence. They are victors in contests

that are decided largely upon the basis of superior ability in manipulating men. Their advance has meant an increasing opportunity to influence the thought of their fellows. In many cases they have deliberately studied the methods of influencing public opinion and have worked to obtain control of the modern equipment necessary to direct it. One of the great engines for moving the public mind is the newspaper and this is always in the hands of urban leadership and a share of its power can usually be had by those who have the necessary "pull" or cash.

Socially the successful farmer belongs to the opposite class. His success has been obtained for the most part by his skill in handling natural law. His struggle has been largely with the obstacles that arise when one attempts to furnish a share of the food supply required by a hungry world. The farmer's experience with the means of social influence is limited and in his business there is no need of his impressing himself upon his fellows. On

the other hand it is natural that he should overvalue the thinking of those who, unlike himself, have developed the art of making social and political impression. This tendency to discount his own social contribution in practice—even though in theory he may often insist upon his paramount social function—makes the farmer a good follower and a poor leader.

And yet in the nature of things there is nothing to demonstrate that socially those who have the machinery that is required for the influencing of public opinion or who have learned the art of impressing themselves upon their fellows are the most fit to direct the social mind. The struggle with Nature teaches as much that is of lasting value for a philosophy of personal or national conduct as comes from competition between people. Even if the population stimulus of urban centers brings forth men of great ability who do large things, it by no means follows that these men are wise merely because they are powerful. And even if they were

justified in claiming superiority at every point over the successful men of the country, it would not be for the social good that they be given a monopoly of social prestige.

Contact with men who occupy high places in city commerce will often convince any one of a neutral and discriminating mind that these men of social power have suffered loss at some points in their developing personality as a result of the struggle that has made possible their success. The present serious discord between capital and labor is fundamentally born of the belief of some that wealth is as socially right in all important matters as it is socially powerful and the faith of others that the social problems that vex men and women would pass with the destruction of wealth's artificial social advantages. Each group confines itself to the territory of experience where everything has to do with matters of human relationship, and each group insists that only one point in that territory can have

value as a position for the observing and estimating of what happens there.

The extreme representatives of each group disclose that they have been forced to a narrow view of human motives and interests by their environmental experiences. They agree in their elevation of the power of money to the supreme place socially—one defending the power as belonging of right to wealth, the other regarding the social situation as due to the unjust privileges of the few who prey upon the many.

The typical farmer is both a capitalist and a laborer and has a saner attitude toward the difficulty than one can have who belongs exclusively to either group. He is likely to accumulate his capital by slow savings, which represent in some degree real sacrifice, and he cannot have sympathy with those who refuse to credit capital with legitimate social function. He also earns his bread by the sweat of his brow and has therefore a first-hand knowledge of the burden of human toil.

This gives him an understanding of the discontent of exploited labor, but also a deep contempt for those who have no interest in the work they do. His thinking in regard to the differences between capital and labor is born of experiences that are elemental in the human struggle for life and comfort and therefore cannot be safely turned aside. His sympathies swing toward one or the other of the conflicting groups according to his most recent economic experiences. If he has been robbed by some commission merchant, he joins the protest against the unjust power of capital; if he has had a hired man who has worked indifferently and with no respect for his vocation, he understands what is meant by the unreasonable and impossible demands of labor.

The unchanging element in his thinking, however, comes from his personal concern with reference to both capital and labor. In other words, he lives closer to an earlier economic experience of man, when the present great gulf between those

who furnish capital and those who furnish labor for industry had not been fixed. Neither the representatives of the capital nor of the labor group, when they undertake what seem to him extreme measures, can count upon his support.

The abiding fact that denies to urban thinking the right to enjoy a monopoly of social influence is this: men cannot safely build up their social thinking from experiences gathered merely from the field of human association. Nature also has lessons to teach and lessons that do not always agree with the inferences that are naturally made when one thinks only of the experiences of men in their associations. It is socially foolish and socially unsafe to disregard, or at least to forget, the value of thinking that functions, as the farmer's does, in the effort to control Nature for a livelihood that directly contributes to human welfare. If such thinking is often prosaic and rigid, it is also close to reality and insistent upon practicality. Narrow it may be at times,

as a result of lack of opportunity to have wide contact, but it is substantial and born of knowledge of the necessary limitations that Nature places upon the wishes of men and women. The farmer by his vocation is taught to be suspicious of easy solutions. He stands aloof from men who claim to have found the panacea and regards men of such abounding enthusiasm as belonging to the same group of the pathetically deluded as the believers in the machine of perpetual motion. The farmer keeps the greatest distance from day dreaming and can never have charged against him as a characteristic fault that menace of self-supporting fancy which is so insidious in its attack upon the mental wholesomeness of a multitude of people.

It becomes, therefore, as a result of a constant and clear-minded attention to the actual working of forces of Nature that seem at times friendly and at times hostile to man's purposes, difficult for the farmer to regard money, even with all its recognized power, as able to do everything,

or the one thing to be desired. This does not mean, of course, that the farmer is indifferent to money. No one who knows him at all would claim that he is unconcerned in regard to finances. He is always interested in money, and, like other men, works to make it. For want of money he is often troubled. He knows how much money will do in the sphere of human association. His everyday philosophy reveals this in ways that one cannot mistake. He also knows, however, that even money has its limits and that these are seen in man's relations with Nature.

How different it is in the experience of the city-dweller! He finds that money will do nearly anything. With money he can have the fruits gathered from the ends of the earth. Without money he is helpless. His protection from disease, from vice, from countless forms of discomfort, disrespect, and exploitation depends upon his ability to pay the necessary rent for safe and pleasant surroundings. How much of suffering, both physical and

mental, the want of a "safe" income brings to the urban-dweller one may discover by merely walking along the crowded streets of any city. Without the necessary money he even fears loss of a respectable funeral and burial place in case of death.

The urban wealthy keep close to more and more wonderful forms of luxury by money. The urban poor keep out of the breadline by money. The middle-class know that with a little more money they may expect to join the first class and with a little less they may be forced into the second. Money seems the one thing of power. Newspapers, street discussions, and public opinion, for the most part, encourage the belief in the omnipotence of money. Only in rare instances, as for example when there is a death in the family, does the city person from his own experience discover that money, which has so much of power among men, cannot fully usurp Nature's control over the desires of men. Having so often seen great

natural obstacles overcome by bridges, tunnels, and immense buildings, the urban person's final mental assumption is that, given enough money, anything can be done. It is hardly strange that the political philosophy which is distinctively urban should be built upon the supreme value of money and the problem of its distribution.

With the present movement of the population toward urban centers, and with the increasing ability of urban people through organization and modern forms of communication to impress their ideas upon men and women far and near, it is hardly strange that we should in our better moments recoil from a materialism which seems to be creeping everywhere into men's souls and producing interpretations of the purposes of life that are false, dangerous, and sordid.

The antidote is a larger contribution to national thought and policy from rural people. Talkers and men skilful in manipulating other men have been taken too

seriously. The doer, especially he who has first-hand grapple with Nature in the contest she forever forces upon men, has a word that should be spoken, a word of sanity. City people are often too far distant from the realities of the primary struggle with natural law to be entrusted with all the thinking. A visit a few months ago to any city seed-store would have forced upon any critical observer how ignorant city people are of the effort required to produce even their most familiar foods.

Healthy national ideals require a contribution from both urban and rural experience. The first we have in quantity. It is the second we lack. It is the business of those who conserve social welfare to respect the conclusions of rural thinkers and to discover how rural experience may make its largest contribution to national policy and social opinion.

RURAL VS. URBAN ENVIRONMENT

VII

RURAL VS. URBAN ENVIRONMENT

We had just finished eating lunch at one of the more quiet hotels of our greatest city. We lingered after the meal for a chat, this being one of the privileges of the place, untroubled by the type of waiter, hungry for tips, who so often at the metropolitan hotels conveys unmistakably the idea that one's departure is expected to follow directly the presentation of his bill. The host was a man of business, famed for his success and his interest in public affairs, and especially generous in giving of his money and time to further movements that attempt the betterment of rural life. He had spent his youth in the open country and had never lost any of the vividness of his first joys. It was this mutual interest in rural problems that had brought host and guest together for a quiet talk.

"Will you give me your deepest impression of the city as you came into it from the country?" asked the man of business of the student.

"I hardly can claim one impression, there are so many."

"But one must be deeper or at least more consciously so than the others. It is that I want. I'll tell you in return my strongest impression when recently I visited, for the first time in several years, the farm where I was born."

"I suppose the line of thought that captured my mind when I first came into the city tonight is what you want."

"Yes."

"I began to think not of your noise or your hurry, your poverty or your crowds, but of your atmosphere of what I call popular materialism. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Perhaps not."

"I mean I sensed everywhere the emphasis upon the power of money. I suppose it is an experience forced upon

the consciousness of everyone who comes into the life of this great city from a small community. It seems as if the city was a monument to the idea that money can do everything, that the getting of money is the only satisfactory purpose of life."

"You must not forget the miser of the small village or the considerable number of city people who do not make business and money-making the chief object of their lives."

"Of course in justice I must remember what you say, for it is true. But you wanted my vivid impression and I give it to you as the feeling that in the city money seems all-powerful. With it you are able to get everything, to do everything. You can command other men and they obey you. You can reach over the ocean and draw luxuries of every kind to you for your pleasure and your comfort. Wherever you go you are invited to spend money. At least it is suggested to you how much you could have to

satisfy your wildest dreams, had you only the necessary bank account.

"On the other hand, without money you are like a lost soul in the midst of Paradise. With a little money your life must be spent in miserable tenements, in a dirty, noisy, unsanitary quarter of the city. Your children, perchance, must become familiar with the neighboring prostitute. Disease dogs your steps. Pleasures are few. More income means not merely renting a better tenement, but also changing to a safer and more pleasant neighborhood. And always facing you at every turn, from every show window, even from the posters on the bill boards, are suggestions of what money could do for you if only you had it."

"I see your point, but not for many years have I felt the truth of what you say. I imagine I felt strongly the power of money when I first came to the city. Of late I have taken the matter for granted and thought little of it. Yet you must admit that money is power."

"Of course, but not to the degree the city deludes one into thinking. Even in the city there is much money cannot do. In the smaller places, especially in the country, one is impressed with the limitations of money. In normal ways it is not possible to spend great sums of money in the country. You do not find methods of getting rid of your money attracting your attention at every turn. If great wealth is spent, a plan must be worked out and some new enterprise undertaken —for example, a magnificent residence or a fancy farm. In the city no forethought is required to spend great wealth. The opportunity is ever at one's elbow. The difficulty is not to accept the importunate invitations."

"I assume you blame the cities for the wide-spread materialism which is charged up against modern life?"

"Not altogether. In the country, as you have suggested, we have lovers of money and we have sordid poverty. But I do think that urban life tends to

emphasize money-getting and to keep it before the mind in a way that is not natural in the small community. Because of this I regard the cities as the natural strongholds of materialism and I see a danger in the urbanizing movement of modern civilization. I think, therefore, that men like yourself should do everything possible to keep in the public consciousness the splendid idealism that is in the city. I mean such kindly sacrifice as the settlement house. However, I have talked enough. What is your vivid impression as a result of your visit to the place of your boyhood?"

"Well, before I give you that, let me remind you that men like myself get our power to help what you call idealism largely because of our money. I suppose you hold, therefore, that even in our disinterested service we advertise the power of money?"

"Yes, I must confess that your influence is never divorced from your standing as one who has made good in the ways of

trade. But what of your country impression?"

"There is no place that still seems so beautiful to me as the place of my childhood. I was born beside a splendid river; and not far from the house, separated from it by stretches of meadowland, was a thick and extensive forest. It seemed as if I had everything ideal for the play of childhood.

"Upon my recent visit I felt as never before the value of what I like to call the freedom of the spirit. It seems as if country environment generously provides what the healthy-minded child most needs —an opportunity for the free play of the fancy. I call it a spiritual preparation for life, but I assume that the scientist would describe it as an experience of the imagination. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes, as far as you have gone. I covet, however, a clearer understanding of what you mean."

"I mean what I used to find in Wordsworth's poetry and in the work of

our own Whittier. I never read them now, but years ago I did a little. You were country-born yourself, as I remember. Don't you recall how your imagination made rich with meaning the simple pleasures and sports of your early life? I can well remember hours of fishing at a dark curve in the river where the water was black even at noon-day because of the overhanging trees. I think I never caught a fish there, but there was always something about the place that made me think that some day a wonderful catch would be made there. It was a place that enlivened the fancy and it illustrates what I mean. There were many other such breeding-spots for fancy scattered along the miles of river and woodland which I grew to know so well."

"Don't you consider your play of fancy mentally dangerous?"

"No, not when it comes into the mind with the incoming tide of experience. There was plenty of reality. We had our discomforts and our disappointments. We

were forced to take into account the causal order of things. But the mind had a chance to add its part to the fact of existence. And so it always needs to be. I have been successful as a man of business in part because of my early use of the gift of imagination. It is bad to have life all imagination, to carry into adult experiences the make-believe of childhood, but it is a miserable and destitute existence for any adult to bring to his work no imagination."

"And you regard your earlier use of imagination as a preparation for your later use?"

"Indeed I do. I also regard it as the best basis for a reasonable spiritual interpretation of life. In addition it furnished pleasures, the memories of which are sweet and wholesome to this day."

"Do city children have no similar opportunity for creating fancy?"

"Perhaps they do, but their imagination is too quickly forced into the hard forms of adult experience. They feel all too

soon the meaning of wealth, the punishments of poverty. They dream of more of this or less of that. They covet possession of the things they see from the store windows or in the yards of more fortunate children. The shadow of the money-magic of which you spoke falls too soon for their later good across their path. With the country boy and girl this is not likely to happen. Their experiences are more buoyant, more interpretive, more exploring. Fancy creates and reveals; it does not largely furnish the false pleasures of fictitious possession. This is to me the difference. The city may be the richest environment for the adult. That is a matter of opinion. But I cannot see how anyone can think of it as the best place for the child. I cannot believe that I would have gotten nearly so much of good from my early experiences if I had lived in the city. If I am right, this is another element to add to the great urban problem. If the experience of the city child suffers spiritual

privations from the limitations of his environment, must this not show itself in social tendencies? In any case I had a motive in what I have said. You are interested in movements that attempt to enrich the experiences of country boys and girls. That is good, but you must not occupy all of the child's time or interest. Give him freedom to discover his own inner resources, the spiritual union between his cravings and the richness of nature. Don't exile him from nature's paradise by too much adult supervision, organization, or influence. In my day we had too little adult assistance in our games and recreation. I can imagine a condition where the country childhood would suffer from too much."

It was this suggestion that I carried away with me from our conversation.

THE MIND OF THE FARMER

VIII

THE MIND OF THE FARMER

In discussing the mind of the farmer, the difficulty is to find the typical farmer's mind that north, south, east, and west will be accepted as standard. In our science there is perhaps at present no place where generalization needs to move with greater caution than in the statement of the farmer's psychic characteristics. It is human to crave simplicity, and we are never free from the danger of forcing concrete facts into general statements that do violence to the opposing obstacles.

The mind of the farmer is as varied as the members of the agricultural class are significantly different. And how great are these differences! The wheat farmer of Washington state who receives for his year's crop $106,000 has little understanding of the life outlook of the New

Englander who cultivates his small, rocky, hillside farm. The difference is not merely that one does on a small scale what the other does in an immense way. He who knows both men will hardly question that the difference in quantity leads also to differences in quality, and in no respect are the two men more certainly distinguishable than in their mental characteristics.

It appears useless, therefore, to attempt to procure for dissection a typical farmer's mind. In this country at present there is no mind that can be fairly said to represent a group so lacking in substantial unity as the farming class, and any attempt to construct such a mind is bound to fail. This is less true when the class is separated into sections, for the differences between farmers are in no small measure geographical. Indeed, is it not a happy fact that the American farmer is not merely a farmer? Although it complicates a rural problem such as ours, it is fortunate that the individual farmer

shares the larger social mind to such a degree as to diminish the intellectual influences born of his occupation.

The method of procedure that gives largest promise of substantial fact is to attempt to uncover some of the fundamental influences that operate upon the psychic life of the farmers of America and to notice, in so far as opportunity permits, what social elements modify the complete working of these influences.

One influence that shows itself in the thinking of farmers as of fundamental character is, of course, the occupation of farming itself. In primitive life we not only see the importance of agricultural work for social life but we discover also some of the mental elements involved that make this form of industry socially significant. From the first it called for an investment of self-control, a patience, that Nature might be coaxed to yield from her resources a reasonable harvest. We find therefore in primitive agriculture a hazardous undertaking which, neverthe-

less, lacked any large amount of dramatic appeal.

It is by no means otherwise today. The farmer has to be efficient in a peculiar kind of self-control. He needs to invest labor and foresight in an enterprise that affords to the usual person little of the opportunity for quick returns, the sense of personal achievement, or the satisfaction of the desire for competitive face-to-face association with other men which is offered in the city. Men who cultivate on a very large scale and men who enjoy unusual social insight as to the significance of their occupation are exceptions to the general run of farmers. In these days of accessible transportation we have a rapid and highly successful selection which largely eliminates from the farming class the type that does not naturally possess the power to be satisfied with the slowly acquired property, impersonal success, and non-dramatic activities of farming. This process which eliminates the more restless and commercially ambitious from the

country has, of course, been at work for generations. It has tended, therefore, to a uniformity of mental characteristics, but it has by no means succeeded in procuring a homogeneous rural mind. The movement has been somewhat modified by the return of people to the country from the city and by the influence on the country mind of the more restless and adventurous rural people who, for one reason or another, have not migrated. In the far West especially, attention has been given to the rural hostility to, or at least the misunderstanding of, city movements which attempt ambitious social advances. It is safe to assume that this attitude of rural people is widespread and is noticeable far west merely because of a greater frankness. The easterner hides his attitude because he has become conscious that it opens him to criticism. This attitude of rural hostility is rooted in the fundamental differences between the thinking of country and of city people, due largely to the process of social selection. This mental

difference gives constant opportunity for social friction. If the individuals who live most happily in the city and in the country are contrasted, there is reason to suppose that the mental opposition expresses nervous differences. In one we have the more rapid, more changeable, and more consuming thinker, while the thought of the other is slower, more persistent, and less wasteful of nervous energy.

The work of the average farmer brings him into limited association with his fellows as compared with the city worker. This fact also operates upon him mentally. He has less sense of social variations and less realization of the need of group solidarity. This results in his having less social passion than his city brother, except when he is caught in a periodic outburst of economic discontent expressed in radical agitation, and also in his having a more feeble class-consciousness and a weaker basis for cooperation. This last limitation is one from which the farmer seriously suffers.

The farmer's lack of contact with antagonistic groups, because his work keeps him away from the centers where social discontent boils with passion and because it prevents his appreciating class differences, makes him a conservative element in our national life, but one always big with the danger of a blind servitude to traditions and archaic social judgments. The thinking of the farmer may be either substantial from his sense of personal sufficiency or backward from his lack of contact. The decision regarding his attitude is made by the influences that enter his life, in addition to those born of his occupation.

At this point, however, it would be serious to forget that some of the larger farming enterprises are carried on so differently that the manager and owner are more like the factory operator than the usual farmer. To them the problem is labor-saving machinery, efficient management, labor cost, marketing facilities, and competition. They are not especially

influenced by the fact that they happen to handle land products rather than manufactured articles.

Much has been made of the farmer's hand-to-hand grapple with a capricious and at times frustrating Nature. This emphasis is deserved, for the farmer is out upon the frontier of human control of natural forces. Even modern science, great as is its service, cannot protect him from the unexpected and the disappointing. Insects and weather sport with his purposes and give his efforts the atmosphere of chance. It is not at all strange, therefore, that the farmer feels drawn to fatalistic interpretations of experience which he carries over to lines of thought other than those connected with his business.

A second important influence that has helped to make the mind of the farmer has been isolation. In times past, without doubt, this has been powerful in its effect upon the mind of the farmer. It is less so now because, as everyone knows, the

farmer is protected from isolation by modern inventions. It is necessary to recall, however, that isolation is in relation to one's needs and that we too often neglect the fact that the very relief that has removed from country people the more apparent isolation of physical distance has often intensified the craving for closer and more frequent contact with persons than the country usually permits. Whether isolation as a psychic experience has decreased for many in the country is a matter of doubt. Certainly most minds need the stimulus of human association for both happiness and healthiness, and even yet the minds of farmers disclose the narrowness, suspiciousness, and discontent of place that isolation brings. It makes a difference in social attitude whether the telephone, automobile, and parcel post draw the people nearer together in a common community life or whether they bring the people under the magic of the city's quantitative life and in this way cause rural discontent.

The isolation from the great business centers which has kept farmers from having personally a wide experience with modern business explains in part the suspicious attitude rural people often take into their commercial relations. This has been expressed in a way one can hardly forget by Tolstoi in his "Resurrection," when his hero, from moral sympathy with land reform, undertakes to give his tenants land under conditions more to their advantage and, much to his surprise, finds them hostile to the plan. They had been too often tricked in the past and felt too little acquainted with business methods to have any confidence in the new plan which claimed benevolent motives. It is only fair to admit that the farmer differs from others of his social rank only in degree, and that his experiences in the past appear to him to justify his skeptical attitude. He has at times suffered exploitation; what he does not realize is that this has been made possible by his lack of knowledge of the ways of modern

business and by his failure to organize. The farmer is beginning to appreciate the significance of marketing. Unfortunately, he too often carries his suspiciousness, which has resulted from business experiences, into many other lines of action and thinking, and thus robs himself of enthusiasm and social confidence.

A third important element in the making of the farmer's mind may be broadly designated as suggestion. The farmer is like other men in that his mental outlook is largely colored by the suggestions that enter his life.

It is this fact, perhaps, that explains why the farmer's mind does not express more clearly vocational character, for no other source of persistent suggestions has upon most men the influence of the newspaper, and each day, almost everywhere, the daily paper comes to the farmer with its appealing suggestions. Of course the paper represents the urban point of view rather than the rural, but in the deepest sense it may be said to look at

life from the human outlook, the way the average man sees things. The newspaper, therefore, feeds the farmer's mind with suggestions and ideas that counteract the influences that specially emphasize the rural environment. It keeps him in contact with thinking and events that are world-wide, and unconsciously permeates his motives, at times giving him urban cravings that keep him from utilizing to the full his social resources in the country. Any attempt to understand rural life that minimizes the common human fellowship which the newspaper offers the farmer is certain to lead to unfortunate misinterpretation. Mentally the farmer is far from being isolated in his experiences, for he no longer is confined to the world of local ideas as he once was. This constant daily stimulation from the world of business, sports, and public affairs at times awakens his appetite for urban life and makes him restless, or encourages his removal to the city, or makes him demand as much as possible of the quantitative

pleasures and recreations of city life. In a greater degree, however, the paper contents his mental need for contact with life in a more universal way than his particular community allows. The automobile and other modern inventions also serve the farmer, as does the newspaper, by providing mental suggestions from an extended environment.

A very important source of suggestion, as abnormal psychology so clearly demonstrates, at present, is the impressions of childhood. Rural life tends on the whole to intensify the significant events of early life, because of the limited amount of exciting experiences received as compared with city life. Parental influence is more important because it suffers less competition. This fact of the meaning of early suggestions appears, without doubt, in various ways and forbids the scientist's assuming that rural thinking is made uniform by universal and unvaried suggestions.

The discontent of rural parents with

reference to their environment or occupation, due to their natural urban tendencies, or to their failure to succeed, or to the hard conditions of their farm life, has some influence in sending rural youth to the city. Accidental or incidental suggestion often repeated is especially penetrating in childhood, and no one who knows rural people can fail to notice parents who are prone to such suggestions expressing rural discontent. In the same way, suspiciousness or jealousy with reference to particular neighbors or associates leads, when it is often expressed before children, to general suspiciousness or trivial sensitiveness. The emotional obstacles to the get-together spirit—obstacles which vex the rural worker—in no small degree have their origin in suggestion given in childhood.

The country is concerned with another source of suggestion which has more to do with the efficiency of the rural mind than its content, and that is the matter of sex. Students of rural life apparently

give this element less attention than it deserves. As Professor Ross has pointed out in "South of Panama," for example, the precocious development of sex tends to enfeeble the intellect and to prevent the largest kind of mental capacity. It is unsafe at present to generalize regarding the differences between country and city life in matters of sex, but it is certainly true, when rural life is empty of commanding interests and when it is coarsened by low traditions and the presence of defective persons, that there is a precocious emphasis of sex. This is expressed both by early marrying and by loose sex relations. It is doubtful whether the commercializing of sex attraction in the city has equal mental significance, for certainly science clearly shows that it is the precocious expression of sex that has largest psychic dangers. In so far as the environment of a rural community tends to bring the sexual life to early expression, we have every reason to suppose that at this point at least the influence of the com-

munity is such as to tend toward a comparative mental arrest or a limiting of mental ability, for which the country later suffers socially. Each student of rural life must, from experience and observation, evaluate for himself the significance of this sex precociousness. When sex interests become epidemic and the general tendency is toward precocious sex maturity, the country community is producing for itself men and women of inferior resources as compared with their natural possibilities. Even the supposed social wholesomeness of earlier marrying in the country must be scrutinized with the value of sex sublimation during the formative years clearly in mind.

PSYCHIC CAUSES OF RURAL MIGRATION

IX

PSYCHIC CAUSES OF RURAL MIGRATION

In modern civilization the increasing attractiveness of the city is one of the apparent social facts.[1] Social psychology may reasonably be expected to throw light upon the causes of this movement of population from rural to urban conditions of life. Striking illustrations of individual preference for city life, even in opposition to the person's economic interests, suggest that this problem of social behavior so characteristic of our time contains important mental factors.

Since sensations give the mind its raw material,[2] the mind may be said to crave stimulation. "In the most general way of viewing the matter, beings that seem to us to possess minds show in their

[1] Gillette, "Constructive Rural Sociology," p. 42.

[2] Parmelee, "The Science of Human Behavior," p. 290.

physical life what we may call a great and discriminating sensitiveness to what goes on at any present time in their environment."[3] This interest of the mind in the receiving of stimulation for its own activity is an essential element in any social problem. The individual reacts socially "with a great and discriminating sensitiveness" to his environment, just as he reacts physically to his stimuli to conserve pleasure and avoid pain.

The fundamental sources of stimuli are, of course, common to all forms of social grouping, but one difference between rural and urban life expresses itself in the greater difficulty of obtaining under rural conditions certain definite stimulations from the environment. This fact is assumed both by those who hold the popular belief that most great men are country-born and by those who accept the thesis of Ward that "fecundity in eminent persons seems then to be inti-

[3]Royce, "Outlines of Psychology," p. 21.

mately connected with cities."[4] The city may be called an environment of greater quantitative stimulations than the country. The city furnishes forceful, varied, and artificial stimuli; the country affords an environment of stimuli in comparison less strong and more uniform. Minds that crave external, quantitative stimuli for pleasing experiences are naturally attracted by the city and repelled by the monotony of the country. On the other hand, those who find their supreme mental satisfactions in their interpretation or appreciation of the significant expression of the beauty and lawfulness of nature discover what may be called an environment of qualitative stimulations. The city appeals, therefore, to those who with passive attitude need quantitative, external experiences; the country is a splendid opportunity for those who are fitted to create their mental satisfactions from the active working over of stimuli

[4] Ward, "Applied Sociology," pp. 169–98.

that appear commonplace to the uninterpreting mind. If Coney Island, with its noise and manufactured stimulations, is representative of the city, White's "Natural History of Selborne" is a characteristic product of the wealth of the country to the mind gifted with penetrating skill.

Doubtless this difference between rural and urban is nothing new, and from the beginning of civilization there have been the country-minded and the city-minded. In our modern life, however, there is much that increases the difference and much that stimulates the movement of the city-minded from the country. Present-day life with its complexity and its rapidity of change makes it difficult for one to get time to develop the active mind that makes appreciation possible. Our children precociously obtain adult experiences of quantitative character in an age of the automobile and moving pictures, and an unnatural craving is created for an environment of excitement, a life reveling in

noise and change. Business, eager for gain, exploits this demand for stimulation, and social contagion spreads the restlessness of our population. The urban possibilities for stimulation are advertised as never before in the country by the press with its city point of view, by summer visitors, and by the reports of the successes of the most fortunate of those who have removed to the cities. In an age restless and mobile, with family traditions less strong, and transportation exceedingly cheap and inviting, it is hardly strange that so many of the young people are eager to leave the country, which they pronounce dead—as it literally is to them—for the lively town or city. It is by no means true that this removal always means financial betterment or that such is its motive. It is very significant to find so many farmers who have made their wealth in the country, or who are living on their rents, moving to town to enjoy life. May it not be that a new condition has come about in our day by

the possibility that there are more who exhaust their environment in the country before habit with its conservative tendency is able to hold them on the farm? One who knows the discontent of urban-minded people who have continued to live in the country can hardly doubt that habit has tended to conserve the rural population in a way that it does not now. And one must not forget the pressure of the discontent of these urban-minded country parents upon their children. The faculty of any agricultural college is familiar with the farmer's son who has been taught never to return to the farm after graduation from college. That the city-minded preacher and teacher add their contribution to rural restlessness is common thought.

In the city the sharp contrast between labor and recreation increases without doubt the appeal of the city to many. The factory system not only satisfies the gregarious instinct, it also gives an absolute break between the working time

and the period of freedom. In so far as labor represents monotony, it emphasizes the value of the hours free from toil. This contrast is often in the city the difference between very great monotony and excessive excitement after working hours. It has been pointed out often that city recreation shows the demand for great contrast between it and the fatigue of monotonous labor. So great a contrast between work and play—monotony and freedom—is not possible in the country environment. In the midst of country recreations there are likely to be suggestions of the preceding work or the work that is to follow. It is as if the city recreations were held in factories. Country places of play are usually in close contact with fields of labor. Often indeed the country town provides the worker with very little opportunity for recreation in any form. In rural places recreation cannot be had at stated periods. Weather or market conditions must have precedence over the holiday. Recreation, therefore,

cannot be shared as a common experience to such an extent by country workers as is possible in the city. Since the rural population is very largely interested in the same farming problems, even conversation after the work of the day is less free from business concerns than is usually that of city people.

The difficulty of obtaining sharp contrast between work and play in the country no doubt is one reason for the ever-present danger of recourse to the sex instinct for stimulation. One source of excitement is always present ready to give temporary relief to the barren life of young people. Not only of the girl entering prostitution may it be said that with her the sex instinct is less likely "to be reduced in comparative urgency by the volume and abundance of other satisfactions."[5] The barrenness of country life to the girl growing into womanhood, hungry for amusement, is one large reason

[5]Flexner, "Prostitution in Europe," p. 72.

why the country furnishes so large a proportion of prostitutes to the city. "This civilizational factor of prostitution, the influence of luxury and excitement and refinement in attracting the girl of the people, as the flame attracts the moth, is indicated by the fact that it is the country dwellers who chiefly succumb to the fascination. The girls whose adolescent explosive and orgiastic impulses, sometimes increased by a slight congenital lack of nervous balance, have been latent in the dull monotony of country life and heightened by the spectacle of luxury acting on the unrelieved drudgery of town life, find at last their complete gratification in the career of a prostitute."[6]

Consideration of the part played in the rural exodus by the nature of the stimuli demanded by the individual for satisfaction or the hope of satisfaction in life suggests that the school is the most efficient instrument for rural betterment.

---

[6]Ellis, "Studies in the Psychology of Sex," VI, 293.

The country environment contains sources of inexhaustible satisfaction for those who have the power to appreciate them. Farming cannot be monotonous to the trained agriculturist. It is full of dramatic and stimulating interests. Toil is colored by investigation and experiment. The by-products of labor are constant and prized beyond measure by the student and lover of nature. Even the struggle with opposing forces lends zest to the educated farmer's work. This does not mean that such a farmer runs a poet's farm, as did Burns, with its inevitable financial failure, but rather that the farmer is a skilled workman with an understanding and interpreting mind. If the farming industry, under proper conditions, could offer no satisfaction to great human instincts, it would be strange indeed when one remembers the long period that man has spent in the agricultural stage of culture. City dwellers in their hunt for stimulation are likely to face either the breakdown of physical vitality or the blunting of their

sensibilities. Country joys, on the other hand, cost less in the nervous capital expended to obtain them. The urban worker, in thinking of his hours of freedom in sharp contrast with the time spent at his machine, forgets his constant temptation to use most of his surplus income in the satisfying of an unnatural craving for stimulation created by the conditions of his environment. This need not be true of the rural laborer and usually is not.

It is useless to deny the important and wholesome part that the urban life and the city-minded man play in the great social complex which we call modern civilization, but he who would advance country welfare may wisely agitate for country schools fitted to adjust the majority of country children to their environment, that they may as adults live in the country successful and contented lives. We need never fear having too few of the urban-minded or the able exploiters of talent who require the city as their field of activity. The present tendency makes

necessary the development of country schools able to change the apparent emptiness of rural environment and the excessive appeal of urban excitement into a clear recognition on the part of a greater number of country people of the satisfying joys of rural stimulations.

RURAL SOCIALIZING AGENCIES

X

RURAL SOCIALIZING AGENCIES

The individualism of rural thinking has been universally recognized. It is this attitude of mind that has produced much of the strength of rural character and much of the weakness of rural society. That the closer contact of town and country and the rapidly developing urban mind require more social thinking upon the part of country people few can doubt. There are some people, however, who fear this socializing influence of urban thought in the country, because they believe that it will antagonize rural individualism in such a way as to destroy the fundamental distinction between rural and urban ethics.

As a matter of fact, however, people in these days obtain their sense of personal responsibility from their confidence in their social function, and this confidence is not developed by an excessive individ-

ualism. The farmer, like men in other occupations, needs to make realization of his social service the corner stone of his moral life. This world war has made every thinking person realize the unrivaled function that the farmer performs socially, and it is fortunate for the future of rural welfare that what has always been true is at last finding adequate appreciation. It is the farmer himself who has most suffered in the recent past from not realizing the value of his social contribution. The widespread thoughtless indifference to his social service has, at least in the oldest portions of the nation, given him an irritating social skepticism and driven him into a dissatisfying industrial isolation. We naturally antagonize what we do not share and the farmer when he has thought himself little recognized as a social agent has had his doubts about the justice and sanity of public opinion.

It was doubly unfortunate that this situation developed at a time when re-

ligion was called upon to make heroic changes in order to adapt itself to the needs of modern life. Formerly religion gave rural thinking a larger outlook than individual experience by providing an outstretching theological environment. Rather lately this environment has ceased to satisfy the needs of rural people. Religion has in the city become social in a way of which our fathers did not dream, and in the country it must find its vigor also by introducing the believer to his social environment in such a way as to emphasize social function, as much as personal inward obligations formerly were emphasized by theology.

We need, therefore, for the best interests of the country that the native sense of personal importance characteristic of rural thinking should be brought into contact with social need, so that it may function socially. Out of this movement will issue most happily a great social optimism in the country and individualism will lose nothing by being adjusted to modern

social needs. The chief agencies that socialize rural thinking are the church, the school, the press, secret societies and clubs, and the industry of farming itself.

The effective rural church as a socializing agency has a commanding position. Even the inefficient church has more social influence than appears on the surface. In a considerable part of the area of social inspiration the Church has an absolute monopoly. The rural church, however, has been until recently too well content with an individual ethics that modern life has made obsolete. In our day healthy-minded religion is forcing men and women to see their duties in social forms. It is becoming clear that one cannot save his own soul in full degree if attention is concentrated upon personal salvation. The country ministry is beginning to feel the changing order of things and there is an increasing attempt to build up a socializing institution in the Church. Such a radical readjustment is not easily made, nor can we expect it to be a complete

success. Ministers are puzzled how to work out the new program; they even at times become discouraged as a result of disappointments. Impatience may be made the cause of defeat in such a reform. It is much to ask of our generation that it turn about face morally. Yet the dangerous thing is sure to happen when no effort is made to influence the Church to assume a moral social function in the country. We think as a people in social terms and the church that remains backward in assuming social duties is bound to be repudiated by the program of vital Christianity. The church that is struggling to maintain the old-time individualism is driven first to isolation and later to social hostility and moral stagnation. The rural church will move on more smoothly if it can obtain better-trained leadership. The minister is not yet given an adequate social view in some of our theological seminaries, great as have been the changes in theological preparation during the last twenty years. It is natural enough that

the more socially minded of our preachers should rapidly drift cityward, for in the urban centers they can obtain the sympathy and opportunities that they crave.

Sectarianism narrows the social viewpoint. It is true that it brings one church into fellowship with outside churches of the same denomination, but it makes for moral division rather than unity and magnifies differences rather than similarities in the community life. Sectarianism is very largely maintained by churches in small places. Where church competition is severe, and especially when church support is dwindling, the Church advertises its distinctiveness and enters upon a life-and-death grapple with its neighbor institutions. Of course this develops sectarianism and forbids the wide outlook in its teaching that is required of a successful socializing agency.

There is positive need of church federation if the rural church is to do its social service properly. The resources of a country community cannot be scattered

if social enterprises are to be successfully carried on. These undertakings are of necessity expensive in proportion to community resources, both in equipment and leadership. Therefore, the religious work must be hampered in its social contribution unless there shall be a greater concentration of religious resources. This fact appears clearly with reference to work carried on by the rural church by means of a community-center or parish house. No form of service promises more for country welfare, but seldom can it be continued successfully year after year in a rural town or small village unless there is a concentration of the religious resources of the community.

Fortunately we have seen of late a vigorous effort to improve the rural schools and to make them more modern. The endeavor has been made to bring the schools more intimately into contact with their environment. This movement naturally tends to increase the effectiveness of the schools as a socializing agency

because the viewpoint that guides the effort is one that brings into prominence the social relations of the schools. This progress is hampered here and there by a considerable inertia for which individualistic thinking is largely responsible. There are also positive limitations imposed upon the expansion of the school's social service due to the physical environment. Distance, the scattering of homes, and the small populations restrict the work of the most efficient consolidated school at some points where it tries to perform the largest possible social service.

As a matter of fact, however, the urban school is far less social than it wishes to be. Under the spell of our own recent educational experience it is difficult for us, who have to do with educating institutions, to see the radical changes that modern life demands of the schools and colleges. We add socializing efforts without removing the individual viewpoint that has gotten into school studies and professional habits. The failures of the city schools are less

apparent because the atmosphere of urban life is itself socializing. The walk or ride to the city school is likely to make some contribution of socializing character even to the unobservant child. It is still true that the education outside of the schools, the spontaneous instruction provided by the children themselves in addition to the publicly constructed school, impresses itself most upon the childish mind. The urban school is greatly strengthened in its social function by this by-product of school attendance. It is aided also by the fact that the public is more critical respecting its service. In the country we find the reverse. The by-products of education deepen character, but on the whole tend toward individualism. The community also is not asking for a large social contribution from the schools, and this loss of public pressure toward social effort is in the country very serious.

The consolidated school, modern in equipment and in spirit, adds greatly to the effectiveness of rural education as a

socializing agency. In spite of limitations inherent in rural environment, the consolidated school is by instinct social, and its community service is therefore being enriched by its successful experience. It will increasingly relate its work to the needs of the community and to the demands of the home and will add to its socializing function by assuming new lines of service. Large as is its present contribution, in the near future it will be much greater. The consolidated school has enabled rural education to assume new undertakings and this is most fortunate, for the old type of rural school has about reached the limit of its social service.

It is safe to assume that neither in the city nor country are we likely to overestimate the influence of the press. The daily and weekly paper have a wide circulation among rural people and furnish a source of penetrating and persistent social influence all the more significant because the readers are little conscious of

what they receive from their reading. Into the most remote places the paper goes and is received with avidity. The appeal is to human interest and is based upon the entire hierarchy of instincts. No agency more successfully socializes. It affords a mental connection with distant places that is a good antidote for the physical loneliness in the country, which many living there experience. It prevents the stagnation that comes from concentration upon the interests of the day and neighborhood, for it draws the attention of the reader out into the world of business and affairs. It keeps country people from a too great class character by charging the rural mind with the effects of modern civilization and of necessity brings rural and urban people into a more sympathetic relation. If it invites some to the city—as it certainly does—it also makes the country a more satisfying and safer environment for those who remain. Fortunately the papers are themselves sensitive to modern thought

and therefore attempt propaganda of a constructive social character. If the appeal to human interests causes these educational efforts to err respecting scientific accuracy, it is nevertheless true that in spite of this fault the articles have a beneficent effect in protecting the country from the excessive conservatism that isolation tends to bring. The newspaper is the great gregarious meeting place of the minds of men and therefore it serves to develop mental association in a most intense manner. The weekly paper also serves a large constituency in the country and on the whole probably socializes in a more profound degree than the daily. The weekly permits the rural reader to associate with the leaders of popular thought and builds up that enthusiastic conviction which leadership always obtains. The leaders of the country districts in this manner come into fellowship with the thinking of urban men of influence. The farm paper is not to be overlooked in a survey of the influence of the press

upon country life. Its little value as a professional journal because of its unscientific character is in many instances a great handicap upon the progress of agriculture, but even when these papers fail in having real worth for the industry of farming they do extend professional fellowship by encouraging harmony and enthusiasm. And as a whole the value of these papers, aside from their socializing influence, is increasing as they are more and more influenced by scientific investigation.

Secret societies and benevolent orders have a large following among rural and village people. They are popular because they perform a very valuable social service. No institution carries on its social function with greater success, and for this reason it is rather strange that rural sociology has not studied these organizations more seriously. Because they afford fellowship, recreation, and comradeship, their appeal is very great indeed to those who feel the hardships of physical isola-

tion. These societies do not limit their usefulness to community welfare in a narrow sense, for they tie their following to similar organizations in other localities and make possible an exchange of interests that socializes in a marked degree. It is true that each serves a limited number of people in the community, but the cleavage is along natural lines and does not provoke feuds or neighborhood hostility.

The one great danger that they create in some small places is the fact that there are so many of them that they capture nearly every evening of the week and make it difficult for any community-wide enterprise to obtain a free evening to bring all the people together. It is also true that some of them fail to take a serious interest in the community welfare, being content merely to enjoy the fellowship that they make possible.

This latter criticism cannot be justly made respecting the rural society strongest in the eastern section of the country—

the Patrons of Husbandry. This society, popularly known as the Grange, affords contact with outside organizations, but it also takes a very practical and sane interest in its own community. No movement has done more to conserve the best of country life; no organization has in the country maintained so sincere a democracy. Unlike most secret societies, it has made a family appeal and has interested husband, wife, and children. It has taken a constructive attitude toward legislation of importance to farmers, and rural life has certainly become greatly indebted to its efficient socializing efforts.

The enterprise most successfully socializing country life is the business of farming itself. The farmer, who once maintained so large a degree of economic independence, has of necessity become a man of commerce, as seriously concerned and nearly as consciously interested in business conditions as the city merchant. This situation is one of the burdens of farming. The farmer must both produce and sell

his crop. Lack of skill in either undertaking may mean failure.

Economic pressure forces attention. The pain penalty, the product of bad adjustment to the demands of the occasion, commands respect. The farmer feels this pressure of economic conditions just as any other man of business. He is not free to isolate himself and enjoy the economic security of fifty years ago. Any indifference that he may assume toward the business world is likely to bring him economic punishment which will teach him his economic dependence as no argument could. It follows that the farmer's attention is driven from family and neighborhood affairs out into the modern world with all its complexities. He thinks in social terms, because from experience he has learned his social dependence in matters that concern the pocketbook. With painful evidences of his economic interrelations in mind, he tends to become tolerant regarding movements that attempt to socialize his community life. He

realizes that the independence of his fathers has gone not to return and that his happiness as well as his prosperity depend upon his opportunity to become well established in social relations.

No experience in the business of farming is so impressive as that of membership in a cooperative enterprise. Whether the undertaking fails or succeeds, it certainly teaches the member the meaning of social interrelations. Often it fails because the mental and moral preparation for successful working together is lacking. This is not strange, for rural life in the past has done little to build up a social viewpoint and the strain placed upon individual purposes in any cooperative effort is necessarily great. Cooperation is never so easy as it sounds in theory, but economic conditions are making it necessary in many rural localities if farming is to continue a profitable industry. Under pressure the farmers will develop the ability to cooperate. In this they are like other people, for cooperation seldom comes

until circumstances press hard upon people who hopelessly try to meet individually conditions that can be successfully coped with only by a cooperative attack. We therefore must not pass hasty judgment upon the failures in cooperative efforts among country people. All such experiences have some part in the better socializing of rural thinking.

Without opposition to those who are placing emphasis upon other lines of rural advance, as social workers, we must keep ever before rural leadership the enormous importance that social conditions have for the prosperity, wholesomeness, sanity, and happiness of rural life. Every agency that has social value for country life must realize to the fullest degree possible its socializing functions if it covets for itself fundamental social service.

THE WORLD WAR AND RURAL LIFE

XI

THE WORLD WAR AND RURAL LIFE

What will be the influence of this world war upon rural life? This question is constantly before the mind of thoughtful people who are lovers of country life and interested in rural prosperity. Of course it is much too soon to answer this question in detail or with certainty. It is true, nevertheless, that already we can see evidences of the influence the present war is having upon the conditions of country life. It is also possible, perhaps, to discover the direction in which other influences, born of the war, are likely to have significance for rural welfare. It is certainly most unreasonable for anyone to suppose that this terrible war of the nations will not greatly influence country conditions and country people.

One result is not a matter for argument. The great war has forced public attention

upon the problems of food production, and, as a consequence, the social importance of the work of country people has been finally revealed, so that even the least thoughtful has some realization of the indispensable industrial contribution rendered to society by those who till the soil.

Has this nation ever before had such a serious realization of the social importance of the agricultural industry? The prosperity of agriculture has become the nation's concern, because these war days are revealing how certainly farming is the basic enterprise of industry. And our experiences are those of the entire civilized world. It is not at all strange, therefore, that thoughtful students and public administrators the world over are earnestly studying how to foster the farming interests, not only during the war but also after it is over.

Before August, 1914, there were few people who realized that, under the conditions of modern welfare, one question of greatest national importance is how

nearly the nation at conflict can produce the food necessary for its existence. It is unlikely that the nations will soon forget this lesson that they have been taught by the ordeals of this world war. Agricultural dependence is for any nation a very serious military weakness.

Nations that cannot feed themselves must first of all use their military power to make it possible to import the needed food. This, of course, is a military handicap, for it removes military resources from the strategic points for defence or attack, that lines of communication with other nations that are furnishing food may be kept open. The more nearly nations are able to obtain from their own cultivated land sufficient food stuff, the more effectively they can use their army and navy in strategic military service.

It does not seem possible that this great lesson can be forgotten by our generation. Perhaps this is the largest result that the war will yield within the field of rural interests. National leaders

as never before will consider every possible method by which farming can be made profitable, satisfying, and socially appreciated. This policy will be undertaken not merely for the sake of the farmer, but also as a means of providing national safety.

The war already has disclosed the tendency of national policy to regard the uses made of farming land as a matter for social concern. In England, France, and Germany especially we have had, as a result of war conditions, public control exercised regarding the uses made of private land. Certain crops have been outlawed. Others have been stimulated and encouraged by the action of the government. It has proved wise to establish this control over the uses made of productive land. Of course, war has furnished the motive and made possible the success of this practical public control of land resources. Indeed, before the war, no one could have imagined that England, for example, could have been

led to so great a public control of the uses of productive land as has already resulted from the war.

Already we find some people advocating that the government continue after the war to exercise a degree of such control over the uses made of private lands and it attempt to conserve national safety by stimulating the production of staple crops. At least for a time it will be difficult to win converts to the proposition that the public has no interest in what people who own productive land may do with their property. By education, if not by legislation, the wiser nations are likely to attempt consciously to direct production for social welfare. Probably some nations will not hesitate to subsidize the cultivation of certain crops in order to keep agriculture in a condition of preparedness for the trials of war.

Whenever the war ceases, one of the problems that will immediately face all the warring nations will be how best to get great numbers of soldiers and sailors

back into productive industry. The task will be the largest of its kind in all human history. We find in Europe those who advocate that the government should place many of the soldiers and sailors back upon the land by making practicable a system of small farms. To some this appears the wise way to help the partially disabled soldiers and sailors. The problem of men suffering from nervous instability deserves special attention. Many who have seen service will return with slight nervous difficulties that will handicap them in certain forms of urban industry. Their best protection from serious disorders will be in many cases opportunity to engage in agriculture. At this point the question of competition with experienced farmers who suffer from no disability naturally arises. Experience may prove that the government can wisely give financial assistance to those placed on the land, by government aid in one form or another, to protect them in their undertakings.

It has been pointed out by European students that the small farm is not likely to increase much the production of the staple crops, since in Europe garden truck is more easily handled by those who cultivate small farms. Because of this fact, the effort of the government to encourage the growing of staple crops for purposes of national safety is likely to be independent of the movement to place soldiers and sailors on the land. In Europe the success of the small farms appears to be conditioned largely by the ability of the land owners to cooperate. Stress will have to be placed upon the development of the spirit of cooperation, and this, fortunately, will have a social influence in addition to its economic advantages. How much governments may do to encourage the building up of efficient cooperative enterprises is more or less problematical, but the experience of Denmark teaches that more can be done than has been done by most governments.

It is interesting to notice how the war has stimulated cooperation in Europe. None of the countries illustrates this more than Russia. January 1, 1914, there were about 10,000,000 members of cooperative societies or about 5.8 per cent of the total population. In 1916 this membership had increased to 15,000,000. Counting in the families of the cooperators, it is estimated that 67,500,000 people in Russia are interested in cooperative enterprises, or about 39 per cent of the population. We find that development of cooperation in consumption has been in Russia directly related to the pressure for food due to war conditions. The large majority of Russian cooperative societies are rural.[1] Other countries, notably England and France, have also felt the influence of the war in increasing the development of cooperation.

In America we are still too distant from the bitter consequences of war to feel

[1] *International Review of Agricultural Economics*, August, 1917.

the need of planning for the care of the crippled and nervously injured soldiers. Imagination will not allow us to picture the returning of the soldiers as a problem. Our remarkable success in getting the soldiers back into industry after the Civil War gives us a strong sense of security when we do consider the matter. Probably if the war continues for several years our problem after this war will be more serious than it was in 1865. In any case we shall have a considerable number of those who, because of physical or nervous injuries, will require public assistance of a constructive character. If such men can be made fully or even partly self-supporting by being placed on land it will help both them and the food productiveness of the nation. Of course, this form of public aid, like every other method of giving assistance, has its political and economic dangers. The prosperity of other farmers must not be disturbed. So many interests are involved that the entire problem demands time for serious

discussion, so that we may not be troubled by hasty, half-baked legislation.

Anyone who has visited an army cantonment has felt the gregarious atmosphere of army service. For a few men this is the most trying experience connected with the service. Others find in it the supreme satisfaction. Every soldier is influenced by it more or less. What will it mean to the soldier who has come into the army from the small country place? We know, as a result of what social workers among the soldiers tell us, that the country boy is often very sensitive to this enormous change from an isolated rural neighborhood to the closest contact possible in a community which is literally a great city. By necessity the recruits from the country are forced into the conditions of city life, into an environment that is more gregarious than any normal urban center experiences. What result is this likely to have upon the future social needs of the men from rural districts? It is to be expected that many of them will not be

content again in the country. They will have developed cravings that the country-life environment cannot satisfy. For this reason it is not likely that the placing of former soldiers and sailors on the land will have in any country all the success desired. Much will depend upon who are selected to go into the country. On the other hand, it is safe to predict that this war will add momentum to the city-drift of our population and increase the number of those who form the mobile class of rural laborers.

301.35G884r
Rural problems of today
1144 00071179 5

301.35 136162
G884r
Groves, E. R.
Rural problems of to-
day.

301.35 136162
G884r
Groves, E. R.
Rural problems of to-
day.

WITHDRAWN

DREW UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
MADISON, NEW JERSEY